Mrs. May Agnes Fleming's Most Powerful Romance, This Week!

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ERMINIE; OR, The Gipsy Queen's Vow.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

Author of "The Dark Secret," "The Twin Sisters," "An Awful Mystery," "Victoria: or, The Heiress of Castle Cliffe," etc.

"From this moment I vow, before God and all his angels, to devote my whole life to revenge on you!"

CHAPTER I.

NIGHT AND STORM.

"The night grows wondrous dark; deep-swelling gusts
And sultry stillness take the rule by turn,
While o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
Roll slowly on. This surely bodes a storm."
—BAILLIE.

OVERHEAD, the storm-clouds were scudding wildly across the sky, until all above was one dense pall of impenetrable gloom. A chill, penetrating rain was falling, and the wind came sweeping in long, fitful gusts—piercingly cold; for it was a night in March.

It was the north road to London. A thick, yellow fog, that had been rising all day from the bosom of the Thames, wrapped the great city in a blackness that might almost be felt; and its innumerable lights were shrouded in the deep gloom. Yet the solitary figure, flitting through the pelting rain and bleak wind, strained her eyes as she fled along, as though, despite the more than Egyptian darkness, she would force, by her fierce, steady glare, the obscure lights of the city to show themselves.

The night lingered and lingered, the gloom deepened and deepened, the rain plashed dismally; the wind blew in moaning, lamentable gusts, penetrating through the thick mantle she held closely around her. And still the woman fled on, stopping neither for wind, nor rain, nor storm—unheeding, unfeeling them all—keeping her fierce, devouring gaze fixed, with a look that might have pierced the very heavens, on the still far-distant city.

There was no one on the road but herself. The lateness of the hour—for it was almost midnight—and the increasing storm, kept pedestrians within doors that cheerless March night. Now and then she would pass cottages in which lights were still glaring, but most of the houses were wrapped in silence and darkness.

And still on, through night, and storm, and gloom, fled the wanderer, with the pitiless rain beating in her face—the chill blasts fluttering her thin-worn garments and long, wild, black hair. Still on, pausing not, resting not, never removing her steadfast gaze from the distant city—like a lost soul hurrying to its doom.

Suddenly, above the wailing of the wind and plashing of the rain, arose the thunder of horses' hoofs and the crash of approaching carriage-wheels. Rapidly they came on, and the woman paused for a moment and leaned against a cottage porch, as if waiting until it should pass.

A bright light was still burning in the window, and it fell on the lonely wayfarer as she stood, breathing hard and waiting, with burning, feverish impatience, for the carriage to pass. It displayed the form of a woman of forty, or thereabouts, with a tall, towering, commanding figure, gaunt and bony. Her complexion was dark; its naturally swarthy hue having been tanned by sun and wind to a dark-brown. The features were strong, stern, and prominent, yet you could see at a glance that the face had once been a handsome one. Now, however—thin, haggard, and fleshless, with the high, prominent cheek-bones; the gloomy, overhanging brows; the stern, set, unyielding mouth; the rigid, corrugated brow; the fierce, devouring, maniac, black eyes — it looked positively hideous. Such eyes!—such burning, blazing orbs of fire, never was seen in human head before! They glowed like two live coals in a bleached skull. There was utter misery, there was despair unspeakable, mingled with fierce determination, in those lurid, flaming eyes. And that dark, stern, terrific face was stamped with the unmistakable impress of a despised, degraded race. The woman was a gipsy. It needed not her peculiar dress, the costume of her tribe, to tell this, though that was significant enough. Her thick, coarse, jet-black hair, streaked with threads of gray, was pushed impatiently off her face; and her only head-covering was a handkerchief of crimson and black silk, knotted under her chin. A cloak, of coarse, red woolen stuff, covered her shoulders, and a dress of the same material, but in color blue, reached hardly to her ankles. The brilliant head-dress, and unique, fiery costume, suited well the dark, fierce, passionate face of the wearer.

For an instant she paused, as if to let the carriage pass; then, as if even the delay of an instant was maddening, she started wildly up, and keeping her hungry, devouring gaze fixed on the vision of the still unseen city, she sped on more rapidly than before.

CHAPTER II.

MR. TOOSYPEGS.

"He bears him like a portly gentleman;
And, to say truth, Vernon brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth."
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE vehicle that the gipsy had heard approaching was a light wagon drawn by two swift horses. It had two seats capable of holding four persons, though the front seat alone was now occupied.

The first of these (for his age claims the precedence) was a short, stout, burly, thickset, little man, buttoned up in a huge great-coat, suffering under a severe eruption of capes and pockets. An immense fur cap, that, by its antediluvian looks, might have been worn by Noah's grandfather, adorned his head, and was pulled so far down on his face that nothing was visible but a round, respectable-looking bottle-nose, and a pair of small, twinkling gray eyes. This individual, who was also the driver, rejoiced in the cognomen of Mr. Bill Harkins, and made it his business to take belated wayfarers to London (either by land or water), when arriving too late for the regular conveyances. On the present occasion his sole freight consisted of a young gentleman with a brilliant-hued carpet-bag, glowing with straw-colored roses and dark-blue lilies, rising from a background resembling London smoke. The young gentleman was a very remarkable young gentleman indeed. He was exceedingly tall and thin, with legs like a couple of pipe-stems, and a neck so long and slender that it reminded you of a gander's, and made you tremble for the safety of the head balanced on such a frail support. His hair and complexion were both of that indefinite color known to the initiated as "whity brown"—the latter being profusely sprinkled with large yellow freckles, and the former as straight and sleek as bear's grease could make it. For the rest, he was characterized by nothing in particular, but for being the possessor of a pair of large, pale-blue eyes, not remarkable for either brilliancy or expression, and for wearing the meekest possible expression of countenance. He might have been eighteen years old, as far as years went; but his worldly wisdom was by no means equal to his years.

"By jingo! that 'ere was a blast!" said Mr. Harkins, bending his head as a gale swept shrieking by.

"Yes, it *does* blow, but *I* don't mind it—I'm very much obliged to you," said the pale young man, with the white hair and freckles, holding his carpet-bag in his arms, as if it were a baby.

"Who said you did?" growled Bill Harkins. "You'll be safe in Lunnon in half an 'our, while I'll be a-drivin' back through this 'ere win' and rain, getting wetted right through. If you don't mind it, *I* does, Mr. Toosypege."

"Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosypegs, humbly, "I'm very sorry to put you to so much trouble, I'm sure, but if two extra crowns—"

"Mr. Toosypegs," interrupted Mr. Harkins, with a sudden burst of feeling, "give us yer hand; yer a trump. It's easy to be perceived, them as is gentlemen from them as isn't. You're one o' the right sort; oughter be a lord, by jingo! Get up, hold lazybones," said Mr. Harkins, touching the near-wheeler daintily with his whip.

"Mr. Harkins, it's very good of you to say so, and I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure," said Mr. Toosypegs, gratefully; "but, at the same time, if you'll please to recollect, I'm an American, and consequently couldn't be a lord. There aren't any lords over in America, Mr. Harkins; though if there was, I dare say I would be one. It's real kind of you to wish it, though, and I'm much obliged to you," added Mr. Toosypegs, with emotion.

"Hamerica must be a hodd sorter place," said Mr. Harkins, reflectively. "I've heern tell that your king—"

"He isn't a king, Mr. Harkins; he's only the President," broke in Mr. Toosypegs, with energy.

"Well, President, then," said Mr. Harkins, adopting the amendment with a look of disgust. "I've heern they call him 'mister,' jest like hany hother man."

"So they do; and he glories in the triumphant title—a title which, as an American citizen's, is a prouder one than that of king or kaiser!" said Mr. Toosypegs, enthusiastically, while he repeated the sentence he had read out of a late novel: "'It is a title for which emperors might lay down their scepters—for which potentates might doff the royal purple—for which the great ones of the earth might—a—might'"—Mr. Toosypegs paused and knit his brows, having evidently lost his cue.

"Kick the bucket," suggested Mr. Harkins, coming to his aid.

"Mr. Harkins, I'm very much obliged to you; but that wasn't exactly the word," said Mr. Toosypegs, politely. "'Might'—oh, yes!—'might resign name and fame, and dwell under the shadow of the American eagle, whose glorious wings extend to the four quarters of the earth, and before whose soul-piercing eye the nations of the world must blush forever more!'"

And Mr. Toosypegs, carried away by national enthusiasm, gave his arm such a flourish that it came in contact with the head of Mr. Harkins, and set more stars dancing before his eyes than there would have been had the night been ever so fine.

The outraged Mr. Harkins indignantly sprung round, and collared Mr. Toosypegs, whose complexion had turned from whity-brown to gray, with terror, and whose teeth chattered with mingled shame and fear.

"You himpertanent wagabond!" shouted Mr. Harkins, "to go for to strike a hunnoffending man like that! Blessed! if I hain't a good mind to chuck yer 'ead fust hout the waggin."

"Mr. Har—Har—Harkins," stammered the half-strangled advocate of the "American eagle, "I didn't mean to do it, I'm very much obliged to you! I do assure you, Mr. Harkins, I hadn't the faintest idea of hitting you; and if money—"

"How much?" demanded Mr. Harkins, fiercely, looking bayonets at his trembling victim.

"Mr. Harkins, if five or even ten dollars—"

"Which is how many pounds?" demanded the somewhat mollified Mr. Harkins.

"Two pound sterling," said Mr. Toosypegs, in a trembling falsetto; "and I do assure you, Mr. Harkins, I hadn't the faintest idea of hitting you that time. If two pound—"

"Done!" cried Mr. Harkins. "Never say it ag'in. I ain't a man to bear spite at no one—which is a Christian maxim, Mr. Toosypegs. A clip side the head's neither here nor there. Same time, I'll take them two-pound flimsies now; it's all the same to you?"

"Certainly—certainly, Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosypegs, drawing out a purse well-filled with gold, and opening it nervously. "Three—five—ten dollars, and two for the drive's twelve; and one to buy sugar-plums for your infant family—if you've got such a thing about you—is thirteen. Here's thirteen dollars, Mr. Harkins. I'm very much obliged to you."

"Same to you, Mr. Toosypegs," said Mr. Harkins, pocketing the money, with a broad grin. "'May you ne'er want a frien', nor a bottle to give him,' as the poic says."

"Mr. Harkins, I'm obliged to you," said Mr. Toosypegs, grasping his hand, which Mr. Harkins resigned with a grunt. "You have a soul, Mr. Harkins. I know it—I feel it. Everybody mightn't find it out; but I can—I perceived it from the first."

Mr. Harkins heard this startling fact with the greatest indifference, merely saying, "Humph!"

"And now, how far do you suppose we are from the city, Mr. Harkins?" said Mr. Toosypegs, in his most insinuating tone.

"'Bout a mile or so."

"Could you recommend any hotel to me, Mr. Harkins. I'm a stranger in the city, you know, and should feel grateful if you would," said Mr. Toosypegs, humbly.

"Why, yes, I can," said Mr. Harkins, brightening suddenly up. "There's the 'Blue Pig,' one of the finest 'otels in Lunnon, with the best o' 'commodations for man and beast. You've heern o' the 'Blue Pig' over there in Hamerica, hain't you?"

Mr. Toosypegs wasn't sure. It was very likely he had; but, owing to his bad memory, he had forgotten.

"Well, anyhow, you won't find many 'otels to beat that 'ere. Best o' 'commodation—but I told you that hafore."

"Where is it located?" asked Mr. Toosypegs.

"St. Giles. You know where that is, in course—heverybody does. The nicest 'otel in Lunnon—best o' 'commodations. But I told you that hafore. My hold frien' Bruisin' Bob keeps it. You'll like it, I know."

"Yes, Mr. Harkins, I dare say I will. I am very much obliged to you," said Mr. Toosypegs, in a somewhat dubious tone.

"That 'ere man's the greatest cove a-goin'," said Mr. Harkins, getting enthusiastic. "Been married ten times if he's been married once. One wife died; one left his bread-board, and run hoff with a hofficer dragoon; one was lagged for stealin' wipes, and he's got three livin' at this present writin'. Great fellar is Bob."

"I haven't the slightest doubt of it, Mr. Harkins," said the proprietor of the freckles, politely; "and I anticipate a great deal of pleasure in making the acquaintance of your friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bob. But, good gracious! Mr. Harkins, just look there—if that ain't a woman hurrying on there after," said Mr. Toosypegs, pointing, in intense surprise, to the form of the gipsy, as she darted swiftly away from the cottage.

"Well, what o' that? Some tramper a-goin' to Lunnon," said Mr. Harkins, gruffly.

"But, Mr. Harkins, a woman out in such a storm at this hour of the night! Why, it ain't right," said Mr. Toosypegs, getting excited.

Mr. Harkins picked up his hat, turned down the collar of his coat, faced abruptly round, and looked Mr. Toosypegs straight in the eyes.

"Do call to her to get in, Mr. Harkins. There's plenty of room for her on the back seat," said Mr. Toosypegs, unheeding Mr. Harkins' astounded look at his philanthropy. "A woman traveling on foot in such a storm! Why, it ain't right!" repeated Mr. Toosypegs, getting still more excited.

"Mr. Toosypegs, Hamericans don't never be a little hout their mind, do they?" said Mr. Harkins, blandly.

"Not often, Mr. Harkins, I'm very much obliged to you," said Mr. Toosypegs, with his customary politeness.

"Because if they did, you know," said Mr. Harkins, in the same bland tone, "I should say you wasn't quite right yourself, you know!"

"Good gracious! Mr. Harkins, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Toosypegs, in a tone of mild remonstrance. "You don't think I'm crazy, do you?"

"Mr. Toosypegs, I don't like to be personal; so I'll only say it's my private opinion you're a brick!" said Mr. Harkins, mildly. "Perhaps, though, it's the hair of Hingland wot doesn't agree with you. I thought you was wery sensible a little w'ile ago, when you gin me them two poun'."

"I'm very much obliged to you for your good opinion, Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosypegs, blushing. "And if you'll only call to that woman to get in the wagon, I'll be still more so."

"And have your pockets picked?" said Mr. Harkins, sharply. "I shan't do no sich thing."

"Mr. Harkins!" said Mr. Toosypegs, warmly, "she's a woman—ain't she?"

"Well, wot if she be?" said Mr. Harkins, sullenly.

"Why, that no woman should be walking at this hour when men are riding; more particularly when there is a back seat with nobody in it. Why, it ain't right!" said Mr. Toosypegs, who seemed unable to get beyond this point.

"Well, I don't care!" said Mr. Harkins, snappishly. "Do you s'pose, Mr. Toosypegs, I have nothing to do but buy waggins to kerry sich lumber as that 'ere? I won't do it for no one. Likely as not she's nothin' but a gipsy, or something as bad. This 'ere waggin ain't goin' to be perluted with no sich trash."

"Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosypegs, briskly, thrusting his hand into his pocket, "what will you take and bring her to London?"

"Hey? 'A fool and his money'—hum! What'll you give?"

"There's a crown."

"Done!" said Mr. Harkins, closing his digits on the coin, while his little eyes snapped. "Hullo! you, woman!" he shouted, rising his voice.

The gipsy—who, though but a yard or so ahead, was indistinguishable in the darkness—sped on without paying the slightest attention to his call.

"Hallo, there! Hallo!" again called Mr. Harkins, while Mr. Toosypegs followed with:

"Stop a moment, if you please, madam."

But neither for the sharp, surly order of the driver, nor the bland, courteous request of Mr. Toosypegs, did the woman stop. Casting a brief, fleeting glance over her shoulder, she again flitted on.

"You confounded old witch! Stop and take a ride to town—will you?" yelled the polite and agreeable Mr. Harkins, holding up a dark lantern and reining in his horse by the woman's side.

The dark, stern face, with its fierce, black eyes and wildly-streaming hair, was turned, and a hard, deep voice asked what he wanted.

"A gipsy! I knew it!" muttered Mr. Harkins, shrinking involuntarily from her lurid glances. "Ugh! What a face! Looks like the witch in the play!" Then aloud: "Get in, ma'am, and I'll take ye to town."

"Go play your jokes on some one else," said the woman, curtly, turning away.

"I ain't a-jokin'. Nice time o' night this to stop and play jokes—ain't it?" said Mr. Harkins, in a tone of intense irony. "This 'ere young man, which is a Hamerican from the New Knighted States, has paid yer fare to Lunnon outer his hown blessed pocket. So jump in, and don't keep me waitin' here in the wet."

"Is what he says true?" said the dark woman, turning the sharp light of her stiletto-like eyes on the freckles and pale-blue eyes of good-natured Mr. Toosypegs.

"Yes, ma'am. I'm happy to say it is," said Mr. Toosypegs. "Allow me to hand you in."

And Mr. Toosypegs got up to fulfill his offer; but Dobbin at that moment gave the wagon a malicious jerk, and dumped our patriotic American back in his seat. Before he could recover his breath, the gipsy had declined his assistance, with a wave of her hand, and had entered the wagon unassisted, and taken her seat.

"I know that tramper," said Mr. Harkins, in a nervous whisper to Mr. Toosypegs. "It's the gipsy queen, Ketura, from Yetholm; most wonderful woman that ever was, 'cept Deborah, the woman the Bible tells about, you know, wot druv the nail through the fellar's head when she found him takin' a snooze. Heard a minister take her for his tex' once, and preach all about it. Our cow's name's Deborah, too," said Mr. Harkins, absently.

"And she's a gipsy queen! Lord bless us!" exclaimed Mr. Toosypegs, turning round and looking in some alarm at the fixed, stern, dark face before him—like the face of a statue in bronze. "Does she tell fortunes?"

"Yes; but you'd better not hask her tonight," said Mr. Harkins, in the same cautious whisper. "Her son's in prison, and sentenced to transportation for life for robbin' the plate of the Hearl De Courcy. He's goin' off with a lot of hothers airly to-morrow mornin'. Now, don't go exclaimin' that way," said Mr. Harkins, in a tone expressive of disgust, as he gave his companion a dig in the side.

"Poor thing! poor thing!" said Mr. Toosypegs, in a tone of sympathy. "Why, it's too bad; it really is, Mr. Harkins."

"Sarved him right, it's my opinion," said Mr. Harkins, sententiously. "Wot business had he for to go for to rob Hearl De Courcy, I want ter know! His mother, the hold lady ahind here, went and sot him up for a gentleman, and see wot's come hof hit. She, a hold gipsy queen, goin' and sendin' her son to Heton with hall the young lordses, and baronetses, and dukeses, and makin' believe he was somethin' above the common. And now see what her fine gentleman's gone and done and come to. Wonder wot she'll think of herself, w'en she sees him takin' a sea voyage for the good of his 'ealth at the 'spense of the government, to-morrow?"

"Poor thing! poor thing!" said Mr. Toosypegs, looking deeply sorry.

"Poor hold thing hindeed!" said Mr. Harkins, turning up his nose contemptuously. "Sarved 'im right, I say ag'in. That 'ere son o' hern was the most stuck-hup chap I ever clapped my two blessed heyes on. Hafter he left Heton, I see'd 'im, one day, in the streets, hand guess who with? W'y, with nobody less than young Lord Williers, honly son o' the Hearl De Courcy, as he has gone and robbed. There's hingratitude for you! I didn't know 'im then; but I 'cognized him hafterward in the court-room hat 'is trial."

"How could he afford to go to Eton—he, a gipsy?" said Mr. Toosypegs, in surprise.

"Dunno! Hold woman sent 'im, I s'pose—'owever she got the money. He was a fine-looking fellow, too, I must say, though rayther tawny, but 'andsome as Lord Williers himself. Hold Ketura was 'andsome once, too; see'd 'er w'en she was a reg'lar hout-and-hout beauty; though you mightn't think it now. Times changes folks, yer know," said Mr. Harkins, in a moralizing tone.

"What made him steal, if his mother was so rich?" said Mr. Toosypegs.

"His mother wasn't rich no more'n I be. S'pose she made enough tellin' fortunes, poachin', and stealin', to pay fur 'im at school; hand then when he growed hup, and his cash gave out, he took hand stole the hearl's plate. He denied it hall hat 'is trial; but then they hall do that. By jingo! he looked fierce enough to knock the judge and jury, and all the rest on 'em, hinto the middle hof next week, hif not further, that day. 'Twas no go, though; hand hover the water he goes to-morrow."

"Poor fellow! Mr. Harkins, I'm sorry for him—I really am," said Mr. Toosypegs, in a tone of real sincerity.

Mr. Harkins burst into a gruff laugh.

"Well, hif this ain't good! Wot fools folks is! Sorry for a cove yer never saw! Wonder hif hall Hamericans is as green as you be!"

After this sentence, which came out in a series of little jerks, with strong notes of admiration appended to each, Mr. Harkins relapsed into silence and the collar of his great-coat, and began whistling "The Devil Among the Tailors," in a voice like a frog with the influenza.

They were now rapidly approaching the city—the loud crash and din of which had somewhat subsided, owing to the inclemency of the weather and the lateness of the hour. The gipsy, who had not heard a word of the foregoing conversation—it having been carried on in a prudently-subdued tone—had wrapped her coarse cloak closer around her, while the gaze of her devouring eyes grew more intense, as the lights of the city began to appear. One by one, they came gleaming out through the dense fog with bug-like stars, here and there; and in every direction.

The city was gained; and they were soon in the very midst of the great, throbbing heart of mighty London.

The wagon stopped, and Mr. Toosypegs sprung out to assist the woman to alight.

But waving him away with an impatient motion, she sprung out unassisted, and without one word or look of thanks, turned and flitted away in the chill night wind.

"There! I knowed that would be all the thanks ye'd get," said Mr. Harkins, with a hoarse chuckle. "Hoff she goes, and you'll never see her again."

"Well, that don't matter any. I didn't want thanks, I'm sure," said the kind-hearted Mr. Toosypegs. "Good-by, Mr. Harkins. Give my respects to Mrs. Harkins."

"Good-night, hold fellar," said Mr. Harkins, giving Mr. Toosypegs' hand a cordial shake. "You're a brick! How I'd like to come hacross one like you hev'ry night! Go right to Bob's, sign o' the 'Blue Pig,' St. Giles, best o' 'commodation for man and beast; but I told you that before. Tell Bob I sent you, and I'll call and see ye in a few days."

"You're very good, Mr. Harkins. I'll certainly tell Mr. Bob so when I see him!" said Mr. Toosypegs, with a severe twinge of conscience at the deception he felt himself to be using; "and I'll be very glad to see you whenever you call. I'm very much obliged to you."

CHAPTER III.

THE LOVERS.

"Oh, thou shalt be all else to me,
That heart can feel, or tongue can feign;
I'll praise, admire, and worship thee,
But must not, dare not, love again."
—MOORE.

WHILE the solitary wagon was driving, through wind and rain, along the lonely north road, bearing its three strangely-contrasted inmates—the gruff, avaricious driver, the simple, kind-hearted youth, and the dark, fierce, stern woman—a far different scene was passing in another quarter of the city. At that same hour the town mansion of Hugh Seyton—Earl De Courcy—was all ablaze with lights, music and mirth. Gorgeous drawing-rooms, fretted with gold and carving, dazzling with numberless jets of light from the pendant chandeliers, odorous with the heavy perfume of costly exotics, the very air quivering with softest music, were thrown open, and were filled with the proud, the high-born, the beautiful, of London. Peers and peeresses, gallant nobles and ladies bright, moved through the glittering rooms; and in laughing, talking, flirting, dancing, the night was waning apace.

Two young men stood together within the deep shadow of a bay-window, in the music-room, watching a group assembled round a young lady at the piano, and conversing in low tones.

One of these was decidedly the handsomest man present that night. In stature he was tall, somewhat above the common hight, and faultless in form and figure, with a certain air of *distingue* about him that stamped him as one of noble birth. His clear, fair complexion, his curling chestnut hair, and large blue eyes, betrayed his Saxon blood. His face might have seemed slightly effeminate; but no one, in looking at the high, kingly brow, the dark, flashing eyes, and firm-set mouth, would have thought that long. A dark mustache shaded his upper lip, and a strange, nameless beauty lit up and softened his handsome face whenever he smiled. Adored by the ladies, envied by the men, Lord Ernest Villiers, only son of Earl De Courcy, seemed to have nothing on earth left to wish for.

And yet, at times, over that white, intellectual brow a dark shadow would flit; from the depths of those dark, handsome eyes the bright light of a happy heart would pass; the mouth would grow stern, and a look of troubled care would darken his young face.

His companion, a good-looking young man, with a certain air about him as if he were somebody and knew it, with a listless look, and most desirable curling whiskers, leaned against a marble Hebe, and listened languidly to the singing. He wore the undress uniform of an officer, and being interpreted, was no other than Captain George Jernyngham, of the Guards.

"What a wonderful affair this is of Germaine's—eh, Villiers?" said Captain Jernyngham, caressing his mustache. "Just like a thing in a play, or a story, where everybody turns out the most unexpected things. The Duke of B—— is going crazy about it. He had invited Germaine to his house, and the fellow was making the fiercest sort of love to his pretty daughter, when, all of a sudden, it turns out that he is a robber, a gipsy, a burglar, and all sorts of horrors. How the deuce came it to pass that he entered Eton with us, and passed himself off as a gentleman?"

"I cannot tell; the whole affair is involved in mystery."

"You and he were pretty intimate—were you not, my lord?"

"Yes, I took a fancy to Germaine from the first; and I don't believe, yet, he is guilty of the crime they charge him with."

"You don't, eh? See what it is to have faith in human nature! How are you to get over the evidence."

"It was only circumstantial."

"Granted; but it was most conclusive. There is not another man in London has the slightest doubt of his guilt but yourself."

"Poor Germaine!" said Lord Villiers, in a tone of deep feeling; "with all his brilliant talents, his high endowments, and refined nature, to come to such a sad end! To be obliged to mate with the lowest of the low, the vilest of the vile—men degraded by every species of crime, below the level of the brute! And this for life! Poor Germaine!"

The young guardsman shrugged his shoulders.

"If refined men *will* steal—oh, I forgot! you don't believe it," he said, as Lord Villiers made an impatient motion. "Well, I confess, I thought better things of Germaine myself. There was always something of the dare-devil in him, and he was reckless and extravagant to a fault; but upon my honor, I never thought he could have come to this. Have you seen him since his trial?"

"No, I had not the heart to meet him. Death would be preferable to such a fate."

"There was a devil in his eye, if there ever was in any man's, when he heard his sentence," observed the young captain. "No one that saw him is likely to forget, in a hurry, the way he folded his arms and smiled in the judge's face, as he pronounced it. By Jove! I'm not given to nervousness, but I felt a sensation akin to an ague-shiver, as I watched him."

"With his fierce, passionate nature, it will turn him into a perfect demon," said Lord Villiers; "and if ever he escapes, woe to those who have caused his disgrace! He is as implacable as death or doom in his hate—as relentless as a Corsican in his vengeance."

"Has he any friends or relatives among the gipsies?"

"I don't know. I think I heard of a mother, or brother, or something. I intend paying him a last visit to-night, and will deliver any message he may send to his friends."

"Will your rigorous father approve of such a visit, since it was he that prosecuted Germaine?"

"Certainly, Jernyngham. My father, believing in his guilt, thought it his duty to do so; but he bears no feeling of personal anger toward him," said Lord Villiers, gravely.

"Well, I wish Germaine a safe passage across the ocean," said Captain Jernyngham, as he listlessly admired his hand in its well-fitting glove. "He was a confoundedly good-looking fellow; cut me completely out with that pretty little prize widow of old Sir Rob Landers; but I'll be magnanimous and forgive him now. Oh, by Jove! Villiers, there goes Lady Maude Percy!" cried the guardsman, starting suddenly up, all his listlessness disappearing as if by magic. "Ye gods! what a perfectly dazzling beauty! Ah! my lord, I thought you would find the subject more interesting than that of poor Germaine," he added, with a mischievous smile at his companion's look of intense admiration.

Lord Villiers laughed, and his clear face flushed.

"The handsomest girl in London, and the greatest heiress," said the guardsman, resuming his half-drawl and languid caressing of his whiskers. "What an intensely enviable fellow you are, Villiers, if rumor is true."

"And what says rumor?" said Lord Villiers, coldly.

"Why, that you are the accepted lover of the fair Lady Maude."

Before the somewhat haughty reply of Lord Villiers was spoken, a young lady, suddenly entering the room, caught sight of them, and coming over, she addressed the guardsman with:

"George, you abominably lazy fellow, have you forgotten you are engaged for this set to Miss Ashton? Really, my lord, you and this idle brother of mine ought to be ashamed to make hermits of yourselves in this way, while so many bright eyes are watching for your coming. Lady Maude is here, and I will report you."

And, raising her finger warningly, Miss Jernyngham tripped away.

"'Fare thee well—and if forever!'" said Captain Jernyngham, in a tragic tone, as he turned away.

"'Why, forever fare thee well!'" said Lord Villiers, laughing, as he finished the quotation, and turned in an opposite direction.

The dancing was at its hight as he passed from the music room. Standing a little apart, his eyes went wandering over the fair forms tripping through the "mazy dance," while they rested on one form fairer than all the rest, and his handsome face brightened, and his fine eyes lit up, as a man's alone does, when he watches the woman he loves.

Standing at the head of one of the quadrilles was the object of his gaze—the peerless, high-born Lady Maude Percy. Eighteen summers had scarce passed over her young head, yet a thoughtful, almost sad, expression ever fell like a shadow on her beautiful face. Her form was rounded, exquisite, perfect; her oval face perfectly colorless, save for the full, crimson lips; her eyes large, dark and lustrous as stars, and fringed by long, silken-black lashes; her shining hair fell in soft, glittering, spiral curls, like raveled silk, round her fair, moonlight face; and her pallor seemed deepened by its raven hue. Her dress was of white brocade, fringed with seed-pearls; and her snowy arms and neck gleamed through misty clouds of point-lace. Pale, oriental pearls wreathed her midnight hair, and ran in rivers of light around her neck. Queenly, peerless, dazzling, she moved through the brilliant train of beauties, eclipsing them all, as a meteor outshines lesser stars.

Drinking in the enchanting draught of her beauty to intoxication, Lord Ernest Villiers stood leaning against a marble pillar until the dance was concluded; and then moving toward her, as she stood for an instant alone, he bent over her, and whispered, in a voice that was low but full of passion:

"Maude! Maude! why have you tried to avoid me all the evening? I must see you! I must speak to you in private! I must hear my destiny from your lips to-night!"

At the first sound of his voice she had started quickly, and the "eloquent blood" had flooded cheek and bosom with its rosy light; but as he went on it faded away, and a sort of shiver passed through her frame as he ceased.

"Come with me into the music-room—it is deserted now," he said, drawing her arm through his. "There, apart from all those prying eyes, I can learn my fate."

Paler still grew the pale face of the lady; but, without a word, she suffered herself to be led to the shadowy and deserted room he had just left.

"And now, Maude—my own love—may I claim an answer to the question I asked you last night?" he said, bending over her.

"I answered you then, my lord," she said, sadly.

"Yes; you told me to go—to forget you; as if such a thing were possible. Maude, I cannot, I will not take that for an answer. Tell me, do you love me?"

"Oh, Ernest—oh, my dear lord! you *know* I do!" she cried, passionately.

"Then, Maude—my beautiful one—will you not be mine—my wife?"

"Oh, I cannot! I cannot! Oh, Ernest, I cannot!" she said, with a convulsive shudder.

"*Cannot!* And *why*, in Heaven's name?"

"My lord, that is my secret. I can never, *never* be your wife. Choose some one worthier of you, and forget Maude Percy."

She tried to steady her voice, but a stifled sob finished the sentence.

For all answer he gathered her in his strong arms, and her head dropped on his shoulder.

"My poor little romantic Maude, what is this wonderful secret?" he said, smiling. "Tell me, and we will see if your mountain does not turn out a molehill after all. Now, why cannot you be my wife?"

"You think me weak and silly, my lord," she said, raising her head somewhat proudly, and withdrawing from his retaining arms; "but there is a reason, one sufficient to separate us forever—one that neither you nor any living mortal can ever know!"

"And you refuse to tell this reason? My father and yours are eager for this match; in worldly rank we are equals; I love you passionately, with all my heart and soul, and still you refuse. Maude, you never loved me," he said, bitterly.

Her pale sweet face was bent in her hands now, and large tears fell through her fingers.

"Maude, you will not be so cruel," he said, with sudden hope. "Only say I may hope for this dear hand."

"No, no. Hope for nothing but to forget one so miserable as I am. Oh, Lord Ernest! there are so many better and worthier than I am, who will love you. I will be your friend—your sister, if I may; but I can never be your wife."

"Maude, is there guilt, is there crime connected with this secret of yours?" he demanded, stepping before her.

She rose to her feet impetuously, her cheeks crimsoning, her large eyes filling and darkening with indignation, her noble brow expanded, her haughty little head erect.

"And you think me capable of crime, Lord Villiers?—of guilt that needs concealment?" she said, with proud scorn.

"You, Maude? No; sooner would I believe an angel from heaven guilty of crime, than you. But I thought there might be others involved. Oh, Lady Maude! must this secret, that involves the happiness of my whole life, remain hidden from me?"

The bright light had died out from the beautiful eyes of Lady Maude; and her tone was very sad, as she replied:

"Some day, my lord, I will tell you all; but not now. Let us part here, and let this subject never be renewed between us."

"One word, Maude—do you love me?"

"I do! I do! Heaven forgive me!"

"Now, why, 'Heaven forgive me!' Maude! Maude! you will drive me mad! Is it such a crime to love me, then?"

"In some it is," she said, in her low, sad voice.

"And why, fairest saint?"

"Do not ask me, my lord. Oh, Ernest! let me go, I am tired and sick, and very, very unhappy. Dearest Ernest, leave me, and never speak of this again."

"As you will, Lady Maude," he said, with a bow, turning haughtily away.

But a light touch, that thrilled to his very heart, was laid on his arm, and the low, sweet voice of Lady Maude said:

"I have offended you, my lord; pray forgive me."

"I am not offended, Lady Maude Percy; neither have I anything to forgive," he said; but his fine face was clouded with mortification. "You have rejected me, and I presume the matter ends there."

"But you are offended, I can hear it in your voice. Oh, Lord Villiers, if you knew how unhappy I am, you would forgive me the pain I have caused you."

Her tone touched him, and taking her hand gently, he said:

"It is I who should ask forgiveness, Lady Maude. Yes, I will accept the friendship you offer, until such time as I can claim a better reward. Notwithstanding all you have said, I do not despair still."

He pressed her hand to his lips and was gone.

"Excuse me, your lordship," insinuated a most aristocratic footman in his ear, at that moment, "but there is an individual downstairs who persists on seeing the earl, and won't take no for an answer."

"Who is it?" inquired Lord Villiers, impatiently.

"A gipsy, my lord, a desperate-looking old tramper, too."

"What's that about gipsies?" said the unceremonious little Miss Jernyngham, passing at that moment. "You must know, my lord, I fairly dote on gipsies, ever since I saw that charming young man they are going to transport."

"How I wish I were a gipsy!" said Lord Villiers, gayly, "for such a reward."

"Pray spare your pretty speeches for Lady Maude Percy, my lord," lisped Miss Jernyngham, giving him a tap with her fan; "but about this gipsy—is it a man or woman?"

"A woman, Miss, they call her the gipsy queen, Ketura."

"A gipsy queen! oh, delightful!" cried the young lady, clapping her hands; "my lord, we must have her up, by all means. I insist on having my fortune told."

"Your slave hears but to obey, Miss Jernyngham," said Lord Villiers, with a bow. "Jonson, go and bring the old lady up."

"Yes, me lud," said Jonson, hurrying off.

"George—George! do come here!" exclaimed the young lady, as her brother passed; "I want you."

"What's all this about?" said the guardsman, lounging up. "My dear Clara, the way you do get the steam up at a moment's notice is perfectly astonishing. What can I do for you?"

"Do you want to have your fortune told?"

"If any good sibyl would predict for me a rich wife, who would pay my debts, and keep me provided with kid gloves and cigars, I wouldn't object; but in any other case—"

His speech was cut short by the sudden appearance of the footman with the gipsy queen, of whom he seemed considerably afraid. And truly not without reason; for a lioness in her lair might have looked about as safe an animal as the dark, fierce-eyed gipsy queen. Even the two young men started; and Miss Clara Jernyngham stifled a little scream behind her fan.

"I wish to see Earl De Courcy," was her abrupt demand.

"And we wish our fortune told, good mother," said Lord Villiers; "my father will attend to you presently."

"Your father!" said the woman, fixing her piercing eyes on his handsome face, "then you are Lord Villiers?"

"You have guessed it. What has the future in store for me?"

"Nothing good for your father's son," she hissed through her clenched teeth. "Give me your hand."

He extended it, with a smile, and she took it in hers, and peered into it. What a contrast they were! his, white, small, and delicate; her hand, bronzed and rough.

"Well, mother, what has destiny in store for me?"

"Much good or more evil. This night decides thy destiny; either, thou shalt be blessed for life, or if the scale turns against thee—then woe to thee! Stand aside—the earl comes."

A tall, distinguished-looking man, of middle age, approached, and looked with grave surprise on the group before him.

"A word with you, lord-earl," said the gipsy, confronting him.

"Speak out, then."

"It must be in private."

"Who are you?" said the earl, suprised and curious.

"I am called the gipsy queen, Ketura," said the woman, drawing herself up.

"And what do you want of me, woman?"

"I tell you I must speak in private. Is your time so precious that you cannot grant ten minutes of it to me?" said the woman, with a fiercely-impatient flash of her black eyes.

"This way, then," said the earl, impressed by the woman's commanding look and tones, as he turned and led the way across a wide, lighted hall to a richly-furnished library.

Seating himself in a softly-cushioned lounging-chair, he waited for his singular visitor to begin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GIPSY'S VOW.

"May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth, a home! the dust,
A grave! the sun, his light! and heaven, her God!"
—BYRON.

"WELL, madam, I am waiting," said the earl, after a pause, during which the wild, black eyes of the woman were fixed immovably on his face, until he began to grow uneasy under the steady glare.

"Lord earl, behold at thy feet a mother who comes to plead for her son," said the strange woman, sinking on her knees at his feet, and holding up her clasped hands.

"Madam, I do not understand," said the earl, surprised, and feeling himself obliged, as it were, to use a respectful form of address, by the woman's commanding look.

"My son is in your power! my darling, my only son! my first-born! Oh, spare him!" said the woman, still holding up her clasped hands.

"Your son? Madam, I do not understand," said the earl, knitting his brows in perplexity.

"You have condemned him to transportation! And he is innocent—as innocent of the crime for which he is to suffer as the angels in heaven," cried the woman, in passionate tones.

"Madam, I assure you, I do not understand. Who is your son?" said the earl, more and more perplexed.

"You know him as Germaine, but he is my son, Reginald—my only son! Oh, my lord! spare him! spare him!" wildly pleaded the gipsy queen.

"Madam, rise."

"Not until you have pardoned my son."

"That I will never do! Your son has been found guilty of willful robbery, and has been very justly condemned. I can do nothing for him," said the earl, while his brow grew dark, and his mouth hard and stern.

"My lord, he is innocent!" almost shrieked the wretched woman at his feet.

"I do not believe it! He has been proven guilty," said the earl, coldly.

"It is false! as false as the black hearts of the perjurers who swore against him!" fiercely exclaimed the gipsy; "he is innocent of this crime, as innocent of it as thou art, lord earl. Oh, Earl De Courcy, as you hope for pardon from God, pardon him."

"Madam, I command you to rise."

"Never, never! while my son is in chains! Oh, my lord, you do not know, you never can dream, how I have loved that boy! I had no one else in the wide world to love; not a drop of kindred blood ran in any human heart but his; and I loved, I adored, I worshiped him! Oh, Earl De Courcy, I have suffered cold, and hunger, and thirst, and hardship, that he might never want; I have toiled for him night and day, that he might never feel pain; I have stooped to actions I loathed, that he might be happy and free from guilt. And, when he grew older, I gave him up, though it was like rending soul and body apart. I sent him away; I sent him to school with the money that years and years of unceasing toil had enabled me to save. I sent him to be educated with gentlemen. I never came near him, lest any one should suspect his mother was a gipsy. Yes; I gave him up, though it was like tearing my very heart-strings apart, content in knowing he was happy, and in seeing him at a distance at long intervals. For twenty-three years, my life has been one long dream of him; sleeping or waking, in suffering and trial, the thought that he was near me gave me joy and strength. And now he is condemned for life—condemned to a far-off land, among convicts and felons, where I will never see him again! Oh, Lord De Courcy! mercy, mercy for my son!"

With the wild cry of a mother's agony, she shrieked out that frenzied appeal for mercy, and groveled prone to the floor at his feet.

A spasm of pain passed over the face of the earl, but he answered, sternly:

"Woman, your son is guilty. I cannot pardon him!"

"He is not guilty! Perish the soul so base as to believe such a falsehood of my high-hearted boy!" cried the gipsy, dashing fiercely back her wildly-streaming black hair. "He, my proud, glorious, kingly-hearted Reginald, stoop to such a crime! Oh, sooner could the angels themselves be guilty of it than he!"

"Woman, you rave! Once again I tell you, rise!"

"Pardon, pardon for my son!"

"Madam, I cannot. I pity you. Heaven knows I do! but he is guilty, and must suffer."

"Oh, my God! how shall I convince him?" cried the wretched woman, wringing her hands in wildest despair. "Oh, Earl De Courcy! you, too, have a son, handsome, gallant and noble, the pride of your old age, the last scion of your proud race! For his sake, for the sake of your son, pardon mine!"

"Once more I tell you, I cannot. Your son is condemned; to-morrow his sentence will be executed, and I have no power to avert it. And, madam, though I pity you deeply, I must again say he deserves it. Nay—hear me out. I know you do not believe it; you think him innocent, and, being his mother, it is natural you should think so; but, believe me, he is none the less guilty. Your son deserves his fate, all the more so for his ingratitude to you, after all you have done for him. I deeply pity you, as Heaven hears me, I do!"

"Oh, then, for my sake, if there is one spark of pity for me in your heart, do not kill me! For, Lord De Courcy, it will be a double murder, his death and mine, if this sentence is executed."

"The law must take its course; I cannot prevent it. And once more, madam, I beseech you to rise. You should kneel to God alone."

"God would forgive him, had I pleaded to Him thus; but you, tiger-heart, *you* will not!" shrieked the woman, throwing up her arms in the impotence of her despair. "Oh, lord earl, I have never knelt to God or man before; and to have my petition spurned now! You hold my life in the hollow of your hand, and you will not grant it!"

"I tell you I cannot."

"You can—you can! It is in your power! You are great, and rich, and powerful, and can have his sentence annulled. By your soul's salvation, by your hopes of heaven, by your

mother's grave, by Him whom you worship, I conjure you to save my son!"

The haggard face was convulsed; the brow was dark, and corrugated with agony; the lips white and quivering; the eyes wild, lurid, blazing with anguish and despair; her clenched hands upraised in passionate prayer for pardon. A fearful sight was that despair-maddened woman, as she knelt at the stern earl's feet, her very voice sharp with inward agony.

He shaded his eyes with his hands to keep out the pitiful sight; but his stern, determined look passed not away. His face seemed hardened with iron, despite the deep pity of his heart.

"You are yielding! He will yet be saved! Oh, I knew the iron-heart would soften!" she cried out, with maniac exultation, taking hope from his silence.

"My poor woman, you deceive yourself. I can do nothing for your son," said the earl, sadly.

"What! Do you still refuse? Oh, it cannot be! I am going mad, I think! Tell me—tell me that my son will live!"

"Woman, I have no power over your son's life."

"Oh, you have—you have! Do you think he could live one single day among those with whom you would send him? As you hope for pardon on that last dread day, pardon my son!"

"It is all in vain. Rise, madam."

"You refuse?"

"I do. Rise!"

With the fearful bound of a wild beast, she sprung to her feet, and, awful in her rage, like a tigress robbed of her young, she stood before him. Even the stern earl drew back in dismay.

"Then, heart of steal, hear ME!" she cried, raising one long arm toward heaven, and speaking in a voice terrific in its very depth of despair. "Tiger-heart, listen to me! From this moment I vow, before God and all his angels, to devote my whole life to revenge on you! Living, may ruin, misery, and despair, equal to mine, be your portion; dead, may you never rest in the earth you sprung from! And, when standing before the judgment-seat of God, you sue for pardon, may He hurl your miserable soul back to perdition for an answer! May my curse descend to your children and children's children forever! May misery here and hereafter be their portion! May every earthly and eternal evil follow a wronged mother's curse!"

Appalled, horrified, the iron earl shrunk back from that awful, ghastly look, and that convulsive, terrific face—that face of a fiend, and not of mortal woman. A moment after, when he raised his head, he was alone, and the gipsy, Ketura, was gone. Whither?

(To be continued.)

Idaho Tom,

THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND!

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER XXI.

"OFFICERS OF THE LAW."

FRANK was not a little surprised by his discovery, for it threw a deeper shade of mystery around the islanders, and the legitimacy of their occupation, notwithstanding the asservation of Zoe to the contrary. The telegram he had read off told him that they were guarded and watched over by "Scout," and that they were kept posted on the island as to what was going on ashore, by means of telegraphic communication. And then "Scout's" allusion to the Boy Hunters *skulking* around, seemed to convey the idea that they—the boys—needed watching.

Frank entertained no fears, however. He could not convince himself that the fair Zoe could be the child of a villainous father, nor that her associations were of a suspicious character. He was inclined to be more charitable toward the islanders from the fact that he had become enamored of the beautiful maiden. A feeling had sprung up in his breast, which he knew full well was the beginning of a first love.

As he sat alone in his tent, busy with his own thoughts, the stillness of the night was suddenly broken by a stern voice calling out, clear and distinct as a trumpet blast:

"Who comes there?"

It was Hubert Leland's voice—deep and full as the lion's roar.

"Officers of the law," was the response that came from out upon the bay, clear and distinct.

"What seek you here?" demanded Leland.

"A fugitive from justice—a boy criminal—whom I know to be with you," replied the "officer of the law."

Frank was startled by this announcement. He knew that there was some mistake, else the man was lying—trying to deceive the islanders. He arose, and, dressing himself, was in the act of stepping out when he heard something like a sharp knife cut through the rear of the canvas tent. He turned in time to see the outlines of a human head thrust into a long slit in the canvas, and hear a soft voice say, in an excited whisper:

"Frank, flee! They are after you! Take one of our canoes in the harbor, and fly for your life! Go, I implore you!"

It was the voice of Zoe.

"I am no criminal, Zoe; therefore I have no fears. That man, whoever he may be, is a traitor and villain trying to deceive you all. I am ever so much obliged to you, Zoe, for your kind warning, but I shall not leave. Your friends will need my assistance, and—"

Further words were here cut short by the deep, stentorian voice of Leland:

"There is a youth here," he shouted to the "officer," "and if you can prove that he is the one you are after—"

"They cannot, father; they are trying to get aboard our island to murder us." It was Zoe who, creeping slyly to her father's side, spoke thus.

At this juncture Frank appeared from the tent. The moon was in the zenith, and the bay lay all aglare with dazzling splendor. Out upon the water, not over a hundred yards from the island, the youth saw a canoe standing. Two men were seated in it, one of them holding a white object evidently intended as a flag of truce.

"What have you to say, young man?" Leland demanded, turning to Frank.

Frank scanned the canoe and its occupants for fully a minute, then replied:

"There is a movement on foot to murder you all. That man is no officer, but a villain—one of the party, I dare say, that attempted to kill me to-day. His story is an infamous plot to get aboard your island."

"What evidence have you for such a bold assertion?" Leland asked.

"The simple fact that I am no criminal."

"But you cannot prove this to be so."

"No, not now, Mr. Leland; but if you permit that canoe to come ashore here the truth will demonstrate itself; especially as to the treachery concealed behind that flag of truce. You are not a frontiersman, Mr. Leland; that I know from observation; neither am I, but I have learned by a short experience not to trust every stranger I meet. The border is a refuge for lawless characters, and so half the men we meet are possessed of the characteristic treachery and cunning of their associates, the savages. I know that man is a villain, for he has told a base falsehood."

A moment's silence ensued. Frank heard a faint clicking sound in the large tent. The battery there was at work, but it soon ceased.

Then Zoe burst from the tent and running to her father's side cried:

"Father, I have heard from Scout! He says look out for five Indians and two white men—that they embarked from the north side of the lake, and, hugging the shore, turned into the bay. They are enemies."

"Then you are right, my boy. Those two men are villains," said Leland. "The five Indians are concealed about the canoe."

Frank knew the source from whence this information had come, but affected ignorance of the fact.

"Sir Officer of the Law," shouted Leland to the man in the boat, "I have reason to doubt the truthfulness of your story, and must decline to allow you to land."

"In such a case, then, I will be justified in boarding you," replied the man in the boat.

"You will do so at your peril, sir. Two men can hardly contend with four. I presume, however," the old man said, by way of testing their cunning, "that if I send the youth out to you that will suffice."

There was no reply, and the truce-bearer and his companion appeared to be holding a consultation. This silence lasted for several moments, when the man finally shouted back:

"I desire to search your island."

"Then, sir, your desire *cannot* be gratified."

"You will all suffer the consequence of harboring a criminal, now mind," threatened the man.

"There is no criminal here," and the words were flung back with defiant scorn. "You are a base coward to skulk behind a flag of truce—a treacherous poltroon! Begone at once, or, by the gods, I will blow you out of the water!"

The man dropped his flag and picked up a rifle from the bottom of the canoe. The polished barrel glimmered ominously in the moonlight, as the villain threw it into position. A bright jet of flame shot from its muzzle, and a bullet whistled close to the ears of Hubert Leland.

"A poor shot," muttered the old man, and turning, he walked calmly to the upper end of the island, where he threw aside the brushwood that guarded the entrance to the long, low tent standing there. He then stripped the canvas from its frame, and busied himself about something that an intervening bush concealed from Frank's view.

The men in the boat, strange to say, disappeared the moment the shot was fired, while the canoe, swinging around, began moving sideways toward the island.

"Ah, I see into it now!" said Frank: "you can easily distinguish half a dozen gun-barrels glimmering over the top of the canoe."

Scarcely had the last word fallen from the youth's lips, ere a broad sheet of flame was belched forth from the spot where Leland stood, and the thunderous crash of a cannon burst through the night, calling forth a hundred echoes from the recesses of the grim old mountains.

The island almost rocked under the terrific shock of the iron-lunged monster, and the recurring sound-waves compelled Frank to press his hands upon his ears to shut out the deafening roar.

All eyes naturally turned toward the canoe, or to where it had last been seen, for only pieces of it were now visible, floating about upon the water. Hubert Leland had, in a measure, kept his word—had destroyed the canoe, and, for all he knew, had blown the treacherous truce-bearer out of existence. At least, no sign of life, no cry of agony arose from the wreck that the solid shot of the little howitzer had made.

"I am so glad matters turned out the way they have, for all it is bad enough," said a soft voice at Frank's side, and gazing down, he saw Zoe, with a pale, yet joyous face, standing near him.

"The villains have received a terrible punishment," he replied.

"I knew you were innocent, Frank—that you were not a criminal."

"I accept your words as a very high compliment, Miss Leland—Zoe—inasmuch as I am an entire stranger to you. And I am almost hourly being placed under obligations to you folks here. I hope I will get away before I become a burden, or lead you into trouble."

"Do not give yourself uneasiness about infringing on our hospitality. It is one of papa's virtues to be generous and kind to strangers whose faces bear such evidence of true honesty as yours."

"Indeed, Zoe," Frank began, but the lithe figure of a man stepped from behind a bush, and confronted them, rifle and hat in hand.

It was Idaho Tom, the Outlaw of Silverland!

CHAPTER XXII.

IDAHO TOM FACE TO FACE WITH ZOE.

THE sudden, silent and unexpected appearance of Idaho Tom on the island, struck Hubert Leland and his friends almost dumb with astonishment. That he had effected a landing without discovery seemed almost incredible; and yet there was the handsome, daring youth before them; while a canoe rocked on the tiny waves that chafed the shores of the island.

"Good-evening, friends," the youth said, with a polite bow; "I beg you will pardon my unceremonious intrusion, and allow me to introduce myself as Thomas Taylor, a romantic young vagabond by occupation."

"Ah, then you are Idaho Tom?" replied Mr. Leland, advancing toward the youth.

"Yes, sir; the same," was the youth's response.

"I am glad, very glad to meet you, Tom, for you have rendered me an inestimable kindness in saving my daughter. Mr. Taylor, my daughter, Zoe Leland."

In her moment of joy and embarrassment, Zoe inadvertently extended her hand to the youth who had saved her from savage power; and in the silent language of a blush, acknowledged the pleasure of his acquaintance.

The touch of her little soft hand thrilled like magic through the form of the impulsive young outlaw; and for a moment his senses swam in a sea of infinite delight. He was confused with joy. It was the happiest moment of his eventful young life, and in his attempt to escape an exhibition of his embarrassment and overflowing joy, he stammered and blushed like an overgrown school-boy. Fortunately Hubert Leland came to his rescue.

"I am surprised, Tom, that you even dared to venture hereaways, to say nothing of your success in effecting a landing."

"Sir, I took advantage of you, I must admit. When you were engaged with those outlaws and Indians, I stole over here from the west shore. I did not come, however, without permission. The Mad Trapper furnished me a canoe and gave me instructions to enable me to reach the island, if challenged by you."

"Then, it's all right, Tom. The Mad Trapper is a kind of a privileged character in these parts. So make yourself at ease, young man. This is Mr. Frank Caselton—a youth who came here through an accident which came near terminating his existence."

"Mr. Caselton, I am pleased to meet you, and congratulate you on your escape," said Tom, extending his hand in a cordial manner; "are you a hunter, Frank?"

"An amateur only," replied Frank.

Zoe withdrew, as did Jamison and Roberts also. Leland and the two boys sat down to talk and watch for some new demonstration of the foe.

"Then the old trapper," said Leland, "thinks that Molock is at the head of all this mischief, does he?"

"He is positive of it," replied Tom.

"Why is Molock permitted to carry on all this deviltry undisturbed by any one?" questioned Frank.

"I might answer your question by asking another: why is yonder mountain permitted to tower above us when if it was away we could see the sun rise?"

"But Molock is certainly not as immovable as yonder mountain."

"He might be conquered if we knew where his den is. But everybody is so busy in this land of hidden treasure that they can't take time to hunt down an outlaw."

"I judge then," replied Frank, "that you have not been long in this country—neither you nor the trapper—else you would know where Molock's headquarters are located."

"Do you know?" asked Leland.

"I do, most assuredly. I have been there—been a captive in his den, and know whereof I speak."

"Can this be possible?" exclaimed Leland. "When were you in his den?—where is it?—and how did you get out? Tell us all about it, Frank!"

"Yesterday morning we made our escape. The stronghold is in a north-easterly direction from here, and in an almost inaccessible part of the mountain. To reach it we first enter a narrow valley which terminates in a dismal canon. This canon leads to a cavern or long tunnel opening into a little round valley shut in upon all sides by high shelving or perpendicular cliffs from thirty to a hundred feet in hight. This valley is where Molock's quarters are. It can be reached on foot only by way of the cavern, although we escaped by means of a rope lowered from the top of the cliff by a friend. We were trying to escape from a party of savages when we ran into the outlaw's den."

"Well, this is surprising news," said Leland.

"It is good news—glorious news!" exclaimed Idaho Tom. "It will afford an opportunity for a little excitement. I haven't had a fight since the night I was caged with old Zedekiah Dee, the trapper."

"That was no boy's play of a fight," said Leland, fixing his eyes upon the young outlaw.

"Then it was you and your friends who came to our assistance?"

Leland smiled, but made no reply. His silence to Tom was an affirmative answer.

"Frank, do you think a dozen men well armed could capture Molock and his band?" asked Leland.

"It would be doubtful, unless you could surprise them. One man concealed in the cavern that leads to the valley could hold it against a regiment of soldiers. They might, however, be *lowered* into the valley by means of ropes and take them unawares."

"Is it true that he keeps a herd of wolves there, or is it only an invention?"

"It is true. He has a pen built of stone, and in it are not less than one hundred wolves, old and young; and they are all that human mind can conceive of half-starved, ravenous, hungry-eyed beasts. The very stones that compose the walls of the pen have been gnawed by the hungry pack, and death itself rises from the pen in poisonous vapors."

"This is worse than I had ever dreamed," replied Leland; "I never credited the report for the reason that there seems to be extant among the Indian tribes of the Pacific a traditionary story that a man herded wild beasts in the mountains and sent them forth throughout the country in an invisible guise to destroy the red-men. In other words, that he was the keeper and disseminator of death. And so the name of Molock has become synonymous with that of the grim monster."

"It is synonymous with Satan, anyhow!" said Tom; "but, friend Caselton, what did the old vampire propose to do with you?"

"Give us over to the tender mercy of his pets."

"He would not have done so, though," Leland said, "it would have been diabolical, in a savage even."

"I believe he would, for human bones lay in the pen."

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Tom, in horror; "of all the stories of crime attributed to saint or sinner, Jew or Gentile, this is the most hellish."

"Inhuman—monstrous!" cried Leland.

"Let us in the name of humanity and the great Jehovah, declare war upon Molock and his minions," said Idaho Tom, waxing eloquent with the spirit of adventure. "Yes," he continued, "let us wage a war of extermination against them. Such a curse should not be permitted to see his shadow in God's mirror, this lake of the clouds."

"I indorse your sentiments fully," added Frank, as the pretty face of Zoe rose up before his mind's vision, and filled his spirit with new strength and courage. In fact, both Frank and Tom had become inspired with the same feeling, by the same object. Both loved Zoe, and in warring against Molock and his band had her personal security in view. Each one, however, mistrusted the other of his regards for the fair girl. Love is keen-sighted and intuitively becomes warned of the regards and motives of other hearts toward the object of its affiliation. Thus forewarned of a rival, jealousy and envy follow the least advantage in favor of that opponent.

Idaho Tom felt that his claim to the hospitality of the islanders was paramount to all others; yet he saw in the handsome face of pleasant Frank Caselton a formidable rival.

The balance of the night was spent by the three watchers in desultory conversation; but by the first streaks of dawn all were astir.

After breakfasting with the folks on the island, Frank and Tom took their departure in the canoe which had brought the latter over.

The boys had grown quite intimate during their short sojourn together. Their naturally impulsive spirits flowed harmoniously together, notwithstanding each considered the other as his rival.

As they glided out from the little island into the bay, Zoe waved them adieu. Each acknowledged the maiden's parting salutation by a wave of the hand.

They soon reached the shore, and having landed and concealed the canoe, walked into the forest, both maintaining an unusual silence.

They finally came to where the prostrate trunk of a fallen pine disputed their passage.

Without a word Tom sat down upon it. His face had assumed a flushed, excited look, and his eyes burned with some inward fire. He drew his revolver with one hand, while with the other he pointed to a rock before him, and then said:

"Sit down there, Frank. Don't refuse. I want to talk to you."

His voice sounded dry and husky, and his outstretched hand trembled like a leaf in the wind.

In obedience to his request, Frank sat down upon the rock facing him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BILLY BROWN'S ADVENTURES.

WE will now go back and look after our other young friends. It will be remembered that Wild Dick, the Boy Hunter, had undertaken to swim ashore after he and Frank had been left alone at the mercy of the waves by the breaking of the paddle; and not knowing but that Frank was close behind, the youth pushed rapidly through the water toward the southern shore.

The Indians seeing the manner of his proposed escape, turned back, and having effected a landing, endeavored to head him off. But Bold Heart, Billy Brady and Perry, who had also witnessed the adventure of their two friends, came promptly to the rescue, and driving the Indians back, covered Dick's retreat ashore.

As soon as he had reached the bank, the fearless young Boy Hunter gave a shout of triumph and turned to see where Frank was. To his bitter disappointment, his companion could not be seen. With eager eyes he searched the smooth surface of the bay, but all in vain; no Frank was visible.

His three companions coming up at this juncture, related what they had witnessed concerning the fate of Frank.

Much of that painful load of fear was lifted from Dick's mind; still he was sorely uneasy, and assumed all the blame for the whole unfortunate affair.

"Then you are not certain Frank was killed?" Dick said, with manifest sadness in his tone and look.

"I think not," Perry replied, "for the reason that I saw him struggling in the water after he fell overboard. I am not certain he was touched at all by the savage's bullet, but he seemed perfectly helpless when the girl went to his assistance."

"Well, dod-rot the luck," growled Dick, in vexation, "if I had a canoe I would go straight to that island and ascertain the extent of his troubles. I am about exhausted or I would swim out there, but the distance is much further than it appears."

"We will have to be patient and trust to fate," answered Perry. "That island may be the rendezvous of a band of outlaws; and then it may be the quarters of friends who will take good care of our comrade if he is only wounded. Here is your rifle and accouterments, Dick. Frank's I will take care of myself."

"Well, what's the nixt confounded thrap wees 'll shtick our plagued noses into?" demanded Billy, impatiently.

"Getting nervous, ain't you, Billy?" said Dick.

"Och, now, and none av yer abuse, or b' the sowl of me grandmother I'll hunt up a rhed-skin and let him scalp me."

"For Billy's sake, what course do you advise, Dick?" asked Perry.

"All we can do is to hang around this lake until we can find out the fate of our friend Frank."

At this juncture Bold Heart, who had been off watching the Indians, came running up excitedly.

"What is it, Bold Heart?"

"Inguns comin'—lots ob um," he replied, moving on without scarcely slacking his pace, and signifying to his companions to follow him.

"Tracks!" exclaimed Billy, as they all started off after the Indian youth on the double-quick.

They retreated back into the hills and concealed themselves among the rocks; but they soon discovered that their lynx-eyed foes were upon their trail and at once opened a vigorous, and not altogether ineffectual, fire upon them. The red-skins were forced to seek shelter, hiding among the rocks where not even the keen eyes of Bold Heart could ferret them out.

"We'll wait here until night covers our retreat, I am thinkin'," said Dick, soberly.

"I declare we spend a good deal of time waiting for the cover of darkness to help us out of our blunders," put in Perry, in a very matter-of-fact tone.

"Toime is gitting to lean heavy on me," added Billy, winking at Dick and Perry in a significant manner. "A game of cards would be a blessed thing to kill toime, and—"

"Ugh!" ejaculated Bold Heart, taking the hint, "me play Billy boy game—two, three games," and dropping upon the ground he produced his greasy pack of cards and began to deal them.

"Yees are my chicken, Ingin; and begorra, it's not a game you'll git, so it ain't," said Billy, seating himself before the red-skin youth.

The game was soon under way. "Seven-up" was Bold Heart's hobby, and Billy was not a bit particular. He could play at any game.

The game soon attained a point where no little excitement enters into the contest. Each stood six points, and it was Billy's deal. The Indian stood upon the king. A low, pleasant laugh burst from Billy's lips when he had looked at his hand.

"Me beat Billy boy—bet chaw tobak," said the Indian, with a grim smile of delight.

"I don't bet nor chaw tobakker," returned Billy, "but I know whar there's a skulp that says you can't beat me fur a skulp."

"Shake," was the Indian's ready response, extending his hand toward his opponent.

The two shook hands over the bet of scalp for scalp, though it is not to be supposed that either was in earnest.

Billy held the ace, and was about to play the card when a savage bullet whizzed through the air and picked the card from the youth's hand, as the report of a rifle rolled down the air, clear and sharp.

"Trump king," said Bold Heart.

Billy picked up the card, but to his surprise found that the Indian's bullet had perforated the center of the card, completely tearing away every vestige of the spot by which it was designated.

For once the young Celt was completely nonplused; but claimed the game on the grounds of having held the highest trump. But Bold Heart would not accept the piece of perforated pasteboard, and a friendly dispute at once arose. To settle the matter arbitrators were called. Perry and Wild Dick were the ones to settle the dispute. They decided that, as Billy's card could not be identified, as the card he claimed it was, it could not be admitted; and so the game was won by Bold Heart.

"All right, and it's Billy Brady that caves handsomely. It's your game, Ingin, 'ca'se the b'ys so say, and ye shall have yer scalp so help me, mother av Moses!"

Billy sprung to his feet, picked up his rifle, and without adding another word stole away—creeping behind rocks, leaping from cover to cover like a hare. No one knew where he was going, but all saw that he was set upon some object.

He crept along among the rocks and shrubbery for some three hundred yards, then descended a steep declivity to the edge of a little plateau, or valley sparsely timbered. Half-way across this opening was a low flat rock, resembling the base of a broken granite column; and directly in a line with this rock, on the opposite side of the valley, the keen eyes of the young hunter discovered the plumed head of an Indian projecting a few inches above the top of a sharp rock.

For Billy to bring his rifle into position occupied but an instant; but, quicker than a flash the tufted head disappeared.

Billy now dropped upon his hands and knees and found that the rock in the opening covered the Indian entirely. Knowing that he was concealed likewise from the Indian's eyes, the youth resolved to creep across the valley and gain a closer position to the foe; so he at once set out, keeping the rock between them, guided by a tall tree on a line with the Indian and rock. Singular as it may appear, the same idea seemed to have entered the savage's brain at the same instant, for he, too, began creeping across the valley, keeping that friendly rock between them, sighting objects beyond as guides.

The result of this movement was that the foes reached the rock at the same moment, unknown to each other, and paused to rest before attempting any further movement.

The rock was nearly circular in form, about three feet high by ten or twelve in diameter, and almost level on top. And this was all that now separated the two enemies.

As if actuated by the same impulse throughout, both Billy and the savage began maneuvering around the rock at the same instant in hopes of getting a glimpse of each other. It happened that Billy went to the right and the Indian to the left, when, to the profound astonishment of each, the face of his enemy whom he supposed to be several rods away, appeared around the rock *not over five feet away!*

The surprise was like an electric shock, and for a moment the foes glared at each other with amazement, then involuntarily dodged back and put the rock between them.

"Hoot now, and by my sowl here's a purthy shindy!" exclaimed Billy, scratching his bushy head, while he endeavored to keep a watch in opposite directions around the rock at the same time. "The rhed fool," he continued, "and phat's brought the gr'asy, big lummix here?"

The youth slung his rifle to his back, and drew his revolver, as it would be a readier means of defense under the circumstances. He kept a close watch on both sides for the red-skin; and it was not long until he saw the muzzle of his wily foe's rifle coming slowly around the rock so far in advance of the savage that that worthy was not to be seen when half the length of his rifle was in view.

With a smile of mischief upon his boyish face, Billy began to back out, keeping just in sight of the advancing muzzle.

"The dumbed fool, and I reckon he'll fire as soon as his roifle teches sumthin' soft," mused the retreating youth.

Slyly and cautiously, his black eyes glowing like living coals of fire, the savage crept on and on, never dreaming that the projecting muzzle of his gun warned the youth of his approach.

Billy's greatest fear was that other savages might be near, and, seeing how matters stood, come to their friend's assistance; but, even in such an extremity, he had his course decided upon, and, with that same broad, comical smile upon his face, continued his retreat, while the unsuspecting foe continued to advance.

In this manner the ludicrous exhibition of savage craftiness and patience, and the spirit of youthful daring and mischief, were kept up until the circuit of the stone had been made more than a dozen times. But by this time the maneuvering began to assume a sameness to Billy that stripped the whole proceeding of its fun and adventure, and so he cudgeled his brain for some other plan of operation.

It was clear to the youth's mind that one or the other must die. The savage was a powerful fellow, of nearly twice his weight, and in a hand-to-hand encounter he would stand no chance with the red-skin. His only hope lay in getting a successful shot at the warrior, and with this object in view, he concluded to open a conversation with the red-skin.

"See here, rhad-skin," he called out, "whar the divil are yees, anyhow! I can't find yees to save me gizzard. Shtop, thief, I want to speak to you."

"Waugh! pale-face lie!" was the rejoinder, and Billy saw the muzzle start a little faster in pursuit of him.

"Hurra, me b'y, and it's a foul-mouthed dog yees are!" replied the youth.

At this juncture the latter saw the muzzle of the rifle disappear, but soon discovered it coming around the other way of the rock. Billy reversed his way of retreat accordingly, and hurried on until he had put the rock between them—that is, its full width. Then, with the agility and silence of a cat, he sprung upon the top of the rock, and stepping back, crouched down so that only the single feather in the warrior's head-gear was visible. This emblem of savage pride told the youth exactly where the warrior was, and as he still crept on as if determined to hound the lad to death by dogged perseverance, Billy shifted his position on the rock so as to maintain the same distance between them.

The savage was creeping along upon his knees, his body bent forward, and his cocked rifle clutched in both hands.

Billy enjoyed the whole affair immensely; but his position would be an imminently dangerous one should other savages happen to see him, and he soon comprehended the necessity of putting an end to the matter one way or another.

To rush across the rock and shoot the savage before he could have time to rise, was the surest, and really seemed the only safe course to pursue; but instead of doing this, the young Irish dare-devil leaped across the rock and dropped himself plump astride of the red-skin's back!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 284.)

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Sunshine Papers.

First Loves.

"WHOM first we love," 'tis said, "we seldom wed."

Ah! indeed! Mr. O. M. But shall I tell you why? Whom first we love we seldom love at all. That is not a paradox—it is simply that our first love is apt to be all moonshine, and when the sun arises the silver glamour we were ready to swear divine proves but a sickly light that pales into nothingness under the greater brightness, heat and strength. Yes, first loves are generally glamoury, moonshiny affairs that will not stand the realistic glare of prosaic, working-time day. Yet they are pleasant to remember—are remembered sometimes with a halo of romance lingering about them that hedges in the soul for years, until we are suddenly brought face to face with that old-time infatuation. Then are we wrapt in amaze at the reality of our ideality. We find that long ago we outgrew the little episode whose memory we have been cherishing with such heroic fidelity. Susan Maria, or Hezekiah, seems a totally different person suddenly met after this long space between the other days and these. Hair, eyes, voice, all seem different from what they were in the remembrance-picture.

Or, you catch yourself shivering at the bare idea of spending endless hours in the intimate communion of wifehood with that man who has at this date not one thought in common with yourself, nor the capability to even understand your views and life.

Or, you laugh at yourself, as at the prank of some silly child, when you endeavor to imagine yourself the husband of that shallow, dowdy woman and father of her neglected children. You see plainly that you have been cherishing a moonshine illusion. Probably you will go back to life wiser, and able to turn heart-whole and gladly to the sunshine.

Yes, 'tis true. We seldom do marry whom first we love. Our first love is so often the affection of a heart just awakening, the passion of a nature quite ignorant of its own powers and capabilities and wants, that the greatest mercy that can crown our lives oftentimes is the wresting of the drama from our foolish hands. It seems hard at first, as many a girl knows. Over first loves what fountains of scalding drops have been lavished; how many extra handkerchiefs have been added to laundry lists; what yards—what booksful of sentimental vows have been uttered, and heroics and hysterics indulged in; and what swollen eyes have recorded the finale to these pretty episodes. And yet, methinks, more bitter woe has come to many mortals that their first love was the love they did wed, than to those who loved and lost to find in later years a more than recompense.

Did you never go along the wood-paths in early spring searching for a frail anemone, a knot of yellow-centered violets, a spray of fairy pink arbutus? As you discovered the first floral treasure how your enthusiasm grew to life, and you praised, and admired, and caressed, and cherished the tiny gift of springtide! By and by you found other flowers, oh! so much more perfect of form and color, so much more fully bloomed, so the incarnation of completeness beside the first poor, little, half-developed blossom, that you gave no thought to the flower you lavished so much tenderness upon ere you found the perfected ones filling your hands.

So the first little bit of the springtide of life we pluck will surely show some day against the perfect blooms of our summer; and it may not be until it is too late for aught but a lifelong acceptance of the mistake. Therefore, I say, the first loves shattered in time are often the crowning good to young lives.

A young man whom I knew saw his first love rudely buried, and received the blow with a mad grief that nearly cost him his life. For years he would not believe he could ever forget—certainly never replace the beautiful illusion. Time came when he was forced to a sudden comprehension of the infinite disparity between himself and the object of his first idolatry. Freed from his romance, he saw things in the light of reality. To-day he is the husband of a woman so completely his mate that their beautiful union seems more divine than human.

And there was Lillian—I'll call her that. How she worshiped the object of her first affection! And when a Providence most kind saved her from wedding that first love, all the light, and life, and trust, in her seemed put to death. But the years went on, and Lillian feels to-day that the best hours of her life were those that saved her from the self that she knows so much better now, and that has found such content and completeness that she smiles compassionately over the madness of its past.

And, indeed, there are scores of cases in every man's and woman's experience which prove, however pretty and pathetic that little reminder—"Whom first we love we seldom wed"—may seem in poetry, it is really—in prose—a most blessed assurance.

Not that there are not some first loves rare and beautiful and unchangeable as eternity—they are the exceptions that prove the rule concerning the generality of such episodes. And since most first loves are childish, rash, impulsive, one cannot help picturing a millennium in which the first love of the youth should be a mother or sister, the first love of the maiden a parent or elderly friend, and so the life-love be a slow, matured, and perfect blossoming after thought and discipline and experience have combined with years to develop the youth and maiden into real manhood and womanhood.

But since we live in an age where girls and boys must needs play at being men and women as soon as they enter their teens, the little sentimental-sounding quotation will remain true. But for consolation to those whom it touches to hysterics, let it be recorded that first attacks of *la grande passion* are seldom incurable, but, like Job's comforters, only leave the system in better order.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

CHAT.—Already Buffalo Bill has excited the envy of other literary stars. The *Chicago Tribune* says:

"There is the same jealousy among great literary people as is observed on the stage or in the studio. Buffalo Bill having written a novel, Miss Braddon exclaims: 'Happily, Fielding, Scott and Dickens are dead.' She might have added, 'And, unfortunately for the race, I am not.'"

Rather hard on the lady, but she, being a woman, is safe; Buffalo Bill never shoots a doe!

FROM a letter before us we extract a paragraph or two:

"I've been 'summering' now for six weeks, and find playing lazy rather agrees with me in warm weather, providing the mind is kept from mischief. 'An idle brain is the devil's workshop,' says the wise old Ben Franklin; therefore, no matter how idle the body is, *keep the mind pleasantly occupied*. And, for that purpose, the popular weekly paper is a great invention. At least so I have found it.

"In my business life I never had time to look at these weeklies, and always thought them to be filled with literary *trash*, but, this summer, where I first boarded, I found your paper and the *Ledger* taken, and having nothing else to read, I took them up, and great was my surprise to find them so delightfully interesting and entertaining. I at once become a regular reader of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, for it seemed to me to be the best of all the popular papers—its reading had more life and rise in it, and its authors seemed to have more *backbone*. I am, I suppose, what you call the 'average reader,' so I write to give you my impression of your different writers and of your paper."

The correspondent's "impressions" are quite correct, on the whole. Authors who write nonsense, or talk in unnatural phrase, must not expect to find favor, for we can assure them that these "average readers" are capital critics, who ask for the best work the best writers can do. That's what we demand and usually give.

HOW TO MAKE HOME HAPPY.

TAKE an interest in what you do and what is done by other members of the household band. If matters do not go right to suit you, see what you can do in the way of remedying what has gone wrong. If you feel like scolding and finding fault, try your utmost to overcome that feeling. One word brings on another, and before one knows it, quite a little family war has ensued. I know it is very hard indeed to curb our passions, but the harder it is the more noble it is in us to do so. We'll feel far happier, by and by, to think we didn't give utterance to the angry thoughts that were almost at the end of our tongues, than to have to repent the hasty words we spoke.

Avoid unpleasant topics for conversation at meal-times, for passion and hot words are not the best things for digestion. If those times are the ones selected for quarreling, the meal will not be looked forward to with much pleasure. But if peace, quiet, agreeable conversation and pleasant words are to be found there, it will be a time that will be remembered in long after years. Some parents like to cuff their children and scold at them between every mouthful they take, until I don't wonder the youngsters are glad enough to remain away from home; that they look upon meal-times as merely hours in the day in which to shovel down their food, as they would coal into a cellar, and get through as quickly as they can, to avoid parental admonitions. Can home be attractive under such circumstances? Can any one think that such things are conducive to keeping the children around their parents or imbuing them with a love for their homes?

Talk with your children on pleasant subjects; let them see that you take an interest in their studies and plays. Don't say you haven't the time to attend to it. You should *find* time and *make* time to do it. It is a duty you owe to yourself and them. You were a child once yourself, and had just the same joys and sorrows that they are now experiencing. You'll not find the time wasted. It will bear good fruit in the end. Love your children, treat them kindly while they are young and they'll not turn against you when you are old and need their care and attention.

It will be more to your credit if you are willing to give in to others once in awhile, and not be so doggedly stubborn and think, because you are once right, that you are never wrong. It is a much better way, if you desire to have a happy home, to acknowledge fully and freely that you have been in error when such is the case. There's nothing mean or dishonorable in acknowledging a fault, and it will make others in the household more willing to do the same. The great trouble of the many family disputes lies in the fact that neither are willing to give in to the other; so, instead of quenching the fire of temper, they only add fuel to it, to end in a volcanic eruption, divorcing man from wife and sending the children adrift in the world, and they will tell you that a happy home is but a myth. How can they think otherwise!

Don't domineer over your servants and those whom you employ to help manage the affairs of your household. Oftentimes the master is more to blame than the man; the mistress than the maid. Find less fault with those that do your work; show them where their error lies, and teach them what they do not know, and you will find it less trouble to get along with them; you will keep them longer with you and thus avoid the constant changing of domestics, besides making your household many times happier and have much less care yourself.

Many pleasant little words and actions go a great way toward mending family jars and keeping them well cemented. When it costs so little to render one's home happy, I wonder that there are so few of them around us. A home may have all the luxuries in the world, and its proprietors have more wealth than they know what to do with, but, if happiness doesn't come with them, I wouldn't give one snap of my finger for the home, the wealth or the proprietors.

Those are just my sentiments. I love harmony and hate brawls. My voice is for peace, not for war. Give me contentment in a cottage to discontent in a brown-stone front. Won't you know how to make home happy, why don't you do it?

EVE LAWLESS.

EXCUSE MY GLOVE.

A LADY correspondent writes: "Certain kinds of mistaken politeness, sincere as they are, are absurd enough to be grotesque. A common mistake of this sort, with some persons, is to say, 'Excuse my glove,' when they offer the hand to a casual acquaintance, or on introduction to a stranger. It might be inferred from this remark that the wearing of gloves is extremely rare in a civilized community, or that the wearer wishes to advertise the extraordinary fact that he has gloves. All he really desires is to appear polite; never suspecting for a moment that he is simply ridiculous. If you offer to shake hands with any one in a place where it is customary to wear gloves, you certainly need no excuse for compliance with the habit. You might with equal reason, on receiving a visitor at your house, apologize for not removing your seat before bidding him welcome. The superfluous phrase probably had its origin in the days when gloves were clumsy, and used more for protection than as an essential of dress. Then the naked hand was thought to be an evidence of good-will and cordiality. Since gloves have been universally adopted, the idea of asking pardon for wearing them is an anachronism as well as an impropriety. Gloves are now made to fit exactly, so that, were it courtesy to take them off on encountering one's friend or acquaintance, an amount of time and trouble would be required which would inevitably render a social greeting at once a comical exhibition and a bore.

Foolscap Papers.

Chicken Notes.

I HAVE such an exalted opinion of a chicken that I would be proud to see it made the national star spangled bird in place of the eagle, which doesn't seem fit for anything particular that I know of.

I can't say that I care so much for chickens in the raw. I prefer them in a fried, stewed or roasted state, so much so that my friends affirm I should have a Rev. attached to my name—indeed, I have a very religious love for chickens, but not so much as to induce me to hunt around for them, *after night*.

I concluded to raise my own chickens, this year, and bought a dozen to begin on. I was going into the poultry business bigly, and the first thing to do was to buy a dozen of eggs of a very costly breed, for which I paid ten dollars. I put the eggs in an old barrel in the stable and crammed a chicken in with them, and put a board over the barrel to keep her to business. I took my wife out, then, to show her my plan of persuasion, and when she looked into the barrel she threw up her hands (hitting me on the nose with one) in surprise and exclaimed, "You old—(I came pretty near writing fool) that is a rooster!"

"Well," said I, "what's the difference; ain't it a chicken?"

"Yes, but roosters roost; they don't *set*," and she yanked that intruder out of there, remodeled the nest and used her endeavors to get a hen to take charge of the concern.

The fellow of whom I bought the eggs told me that breed was all colors, and that, of course, extra fine; they ate very little and got very fat on it, never scratched in the garden and could come nearer laying hard boiled eggs (of which I am very fond) than any other chickens.

The next day for supper we had eggs boiled, and when we asked Biddy where she got eggs she said she found a whole nest full out in the stable and had brought them in.

I felt like cramming every one of them down her throat, shells and all. I didn't touch one of them, because I could not afford to eat eggs which cost so much, so I threw them out.

By and by our hens got to laying but they always went over into my neighbor's yard for the purpose, and I don't think that he ever wrung their necks and threw them back because they did so. It always looked to me like he tried to coax them over there if he did anything. He is not a hard-hearted man—only at times.

When I stopped up the crack through which they went they got to flying over the fence, until I had to tie a string and stone to their legs by way of a hobble. I thereby prevented the old hens from being spring-chickens; it took much of the spring out of them.

By close management and hard setting, in due course of time, there was about one hundred little unplumed chicklets swarming around the yard, and they looked so scraggy, without a suit of clothes, that I thought it would be a charitable act to tar and feather them, but I could not help looking with pride on those little earnests of future stews, and longed for the time when I should hear the music of their sweet little necks ringing.

I went out one morning and saw almost every one of them throwing their heads up and opening and shutting their mouths in a way that made me think they wanted it to rain so they could get a drink; but they wouldn't drink. Then I, out of pure pity for them, got strings and began to tie their mouths shut, for it seemed that they couldn't help opening them, when my wife came running out, with dough on her hands and fire in her eyes, and asked me what in the name of sense I was up to? I explained the circumstances.

"Why, can't you see that they have got the gapes?" she cried.

The gapes! What in the world did they get the gapes for?

Then the gaps which the gapes in a few days began to make in that litter of chicks were enough to make me gape, for it seriously threatened to undermine my ministerial hopes, and I began to see that it was a difficult thing to attempt to cultivate chickens.

It was eggsasperating.

What the gapes didn't carry off the rats turned in and helped, and then a few I tramped on and flattened out.

What few were left were so very slow in getting ripe that in four months they were so little twelve of them wouldn't make a dozen, and I could have eaten seven of them and then not be much hungrier than before I sat down.

They are so small that sixteen or seventeen of them could go through a hole, single file.

They are so puny that they can hardly bear up the name of chickens, and the worm is always a little too early for them and succeeds in getting away.

Chickens lay in the daytime, but they are the greatest things in the world to sit up all night.

Chickens roost on poles, so it is as necessary to pole them as it is to pole beans and peas.

Thoughtful burglars are always careful enough to lift mine off the poles by the neck, so they will not squall and disturb my dreams—which is very kind.

I can pick a chicken to perfection—that is, I can pick out the fat ones; but I can't tell their ages by looking at their teeth.

Sometimes I am almost glad that all our chickens didn't survive, because every acquaintance I have signified his intention of coming down to see me when the chickens got in full bloom.

Chickens I have found are good things to buy or borrow, but you can't raise them to pay, even with a derrick.

The roosters always wake me up by crowing several times a night, which is a severe crow-bar to my repose.

But I am ready to be invited out where-ever chickens are roosting on a plate.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

WHERE there is much light the shadow is deep.

[This sweet tribute to the memory of Lettie A. Irons comes from her former teacher. The dear "Lost Lenore" left many an aching heart behind when she passed away.]

OUR LETTIE.

BY MRS. C. L. A. BENTLEY.

Gone, our beautiful hazel-eyed darling;
  Passed from our vision our suffering dear;
Gone where bright spirits were waiting to welcome
  Her, we were striving to keep with us here.

Scarcely a change—and she is an angel,
  For pure was her record—blameless her life;
Her sweet voice now silent, through trials could utter
  Never an accent of anger or strife.

Oh! in our hearts there is pain and sorrow;
  Strong were love's fetters and willingly worn;
Deep in our souls the casket we cherished—
  Worshiped the jewel just now from it torn.

Whence do you wander, idol and loved one?
  In your new freedom, oh! where do you go?
Off to the islands of tropical beauty,
  Where the waters of life unceasingly flow?

Or, do you linger round scenes of your world-life,
  Watching and guarding your loved on their way,
Over rough pathways thorny and rugged,
  Up to the mansions of sweet lasting day?

All these wild questions 'rise in our bosoms,
  Yet we are sure with *you* "all is well;"
Thus we leave you in care of the angels,
  Lettie, *dear* Lettie, a long earth farewell!

Topics of the Time.

—Danbury has the champion patient boy. He went to a neighbor's for a cup of sour milk. "I haven't anything but sweet milk," said the woman, pettishly. "I'll wait till it sours," said the obliging youth, sinking into a chair. But, he needn't have waited. He only had to take the milk, go home and say "it's ours."

—In the recent competition for the painting of the curtain of the Dresden theater, the successful candidate was Prof. Ferdinand Keller, of Carlsruhe, whose early life was passed amid the magnificent scenery of the river Amazon, where he gained an intimate knowledge of tropical nature, now richly displayed in his paintings. No great artist ever flourished who did not study nature deeply and long. No profession is more exacting of its pupils, and those who think that, because they have a taste for drawing and painting, they are going to succeed as artists, are much astonished when they learn, after a few months' trial, that their taste for art is merely a pre-requisite for study. Patient, persevering copying from nature is the key note of all success in art.

—Woman Suffrage in Wyoming Territory is now announced as having resulted "in making everything as it was before, only a little more so." A good observer, writing from Cheyenne, under late date, says there has been no change—that they almost uniformly vote as their husbands vote—that they do not remain at all at the polls, but vote quietly and go home—that all classes of men treat them as voters with respect, etc., etc. It is, of course, no fair test of the effects of woman suffrage, since the territory is very sparsely settled and the occasions for elections very few—all important offices being appointive. Still, the experiment has an interest because it is a success as far as it has been carried.

—Seeing the efforts making in California to put a stop to swearing, the Virginia authorities have taken heart, and in Richmond are enforcing the law against profanity—two dollars for every offense, whereupon the *Whig* of that city declares, that if every policeman and constable in the State would use ordinary vigilance, in the course of a year or two a sufficient sum could thus be realized to pay off the State debt. Here is a hint for New York and Brooklyn—a way out of their weary struggle with city debts. And Chicago—why, it would be the richest city treasury in the New World if such a fine were enforced on its people, for one year, but—how poor would its inhabitants become!

—At the Jardin d'Acclimatation, in Paris, the Seyyid of Zanzibar exhibited surprise at the zebras being so tame as to draw the water-carts and make themselves otherwise useful. This is the first place indeed at which this has been accomplished. The zebra is the true wild horse, and is a vicious brute. Our wild horses are not such at all—that is, they are not aboriginals. All the so-called wild horses on the Western plains, and in northern Texas, came from the horses brought over by Cortez and his followers. Before Cortez came there were no horses on this continent.

—Give a boy a market-basket of groceries to carry home, and he will swing it across his spine, bend half-way to the ground and groan with agony, but give him that weight of base-ball bats and he will skip along as merry as a potato-bug in a ten-acre lot. It makes all the difference in the world whose burdens we bear—our own or those of other people. At a scolding wife we can smile, but let your wife's aunt scold around half as much and it is mighty hard to bear. Reason why: we don't own the aunt, and do own the wife—that is, own up to her.

—We can have some idea of the riches now pouring into the coin circulation of the world by the stated gold products of California and Australia—about one hundred and fifty millions of dollars per year; but the great silver bonanza of the Comstock lode in Nevada is now yielding such products of metal as threaten to make silver as cheap as copper. One working in the vein, known as the "Consolidated Virginia," is now sending forth a stream of ore worth $2,000 per hour, or more than a dollar every two seconds. The stock of this mine is quoted at $225 a share. Three years ago it was selling for twenty-six dollars. In one week it leaped to seventy-six, and later to nearly $800. Such are the vagaries of Nevada mining stock. It is gravely asserted by some authorities that Nevada is literally seamed with silver-veins, at a depth which precludes their present working, but some of which, when opened, will quite throw the "big bonanza" in the shade.

—Speaking of the Pacific States, we are no longer justified in regarding society there as lawless and unrestrained. In San Francisco reform has gone so far that a man is fined for "using vulgar language." One of the Police Justices in that city has paid many times his own salary into the city treasury in the shape of fines imposed for this offense. But, we are told, the amount of vulgar language and profanity heard in private has been largely increased by his efforts to suppress it in public! Rather discouraging, it must be confessed, and yet they say "no more missionaries are wanted there."

—Harper's Magazine tells the story of a hired girl who, going home on her annual vacation, left as a substitute an "educated wench," and came back to find a very dirty house, whereupon she exclaimed, "I tell you what it is, Misses, you can't get grammar and clean corners out of the same nigger." This same impression prevails in other circles than "down-stairs." We heard, only a day or two ago, a wealthy business man aver that education had spoiled many a boy for a business life—that all the education a business man wanted he could acquire before fifteen; after that, the counting-room, or store, or railway office was his place. Those who think this way, we venture to say, are in the majority—for proof of which rather startling assertion observe that the majority of those now being instructed in a business life are not even educated up to the point of talking or writing good grammar. Notwithstanding our much boasted "general intelligence," this fact (which is readily verified) ought to excite a movement for reform.

—An English lady and her son died a few days ago at Heidelberg, poisoned by eating mushrooms. The gentleman and a younger brother gathered them in the woods, and, on returning to their boarding-house, ordered them to be cooked for their supper, against the advice of the landlady. The brother and another lady, who ate of them, are out of danger, though still seriously ill.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its folio or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We decline "Aunt Rachel's Story;" "She Won a Gem but Lost a Star;" "Twilight;" "The Storm-Terror;" "Water Racing;" "How to Shoot;" "The Six Sisters' Sacrifice;" "Love Me No More;" "The Street Musician's Story;" "A Mad Test;" "Mr. Primrose's New Guest;" "A Fatal Pledge."

We file for use "A Memory;" "My Friend's Son;" "The Two Mates;" "Many Years Ago;" "A Slight Mistake;" "The Beaver-kill Tragedy;" "The Big Mustanger's Revelation."

A. L., City. We never pronounce on a part of a MS.

G. G. S. No stamps. Can't return MSS. at our own expense.

ELLA M. We hear that Mr. Tilton is hard at work on a new novel.

OUTCAST. Do go to the home offered. Heaven will bless your efforts for reform.

N. E. W. Have written declining MS. proffered.

MISS A. S. S. MS. returned as ordered. MSS. returned only when stamps are inclosed.

READER, Chicago. See any Book of Games for checkers.

PRINTER'S APPRENTICE. Solution correct. See answer given last week.

RED ERE. Have no remembrance of your questions. All received have been answered.

A READER, Somerville. The New York daily papers have just given the information you seek for.

GUS AIMARD. The item giving Goldsmith Maid's great time at Rochester as 3:15¼ was a typographical error, of course, for 2:15¼. Lula, who stood only half a length behind the Maid, is, we believe, over ten years old.

SUBSCRIBER, Orange. Nell Gwynne was a famous beauty who won the "favors" of Charles II., and for a time was a reigning beauty in the very dissolute society of Charles' reign. She was of very low origin, but had much sweetness of character. Her associations were in keeping with that of many professed "ladies."

READER. Give a wedding gift at any time. It is usual to defer such gifts to the marriage-day, but that is all a matter of taste or convenience. If the gift is something that the lady is to wear it had better be presented a few days beforehand, for her own convenience in adapting her wardrobe or adornments to it.

ACH ZIZKA. Your only course would be to push on to St. Paul, in Minnesota, or to one of the upper forts of the Missouri, from which hunters start out on their winter trapping expeditions. A hunter's life is one of severest hardship and peril, and is, really, very illy paid. We would advise any other calling than that of hunter and trapper, as a means of living.

L. E. B. South America offers some inducements to enterprising young men. The Spanish language is spoken in all its States, save in Brazil, where Portuguese is more generally in use. North Americans are everywhere found in the southern continent. The best route is by Panama, and steamers thence down the coast to Valparaiso.

S. O. L. Beadle's Dime Book of Verses is what you want. It covers all the themes of affection, friendship, love, etc., and gives valentines, verses for all occasions, tomb inscriptions, etc. It was compiled by one of our best living poets.

BUSYBODY. Your industry and ingenuity argue well for your future. Every boy who can have a workshop and "kit" of tools ought to enjoy them. A real good lathe (the Eureka) can be had for $9, or full-rigged for foot power for $15. A lathe is a handy thing to have in your "shop."

MRS. P. L. E. Queen Victoria is the daughter of the Duke of Kent—*fourth* son of George III., and therefore cousin of the licentious George IV. William IV., who succeeded George IV., was *second* son of George III. He reigned from June 26th, 1830 to June 20th, 1837—when Victoria, then eighteen years of age, was proclaimed queen. A special act of parliament had declared her "of age," in view of her being called to the throne.

GEO. N. J. If your sister *craves* sour things by all means let her have them. It is *not* an "unnatural appetite," nor one to be reproved; but, on the contrary, one to be carefully catered for. Strong acids like vinegar and raw lemon juice are too *harsh* where used freely. Better give the acid in the shape of sour fruits, fresh or cooked. Tomatoes are excellent. A craving for acids is a sure sign of biliousness or a low form of fever.

YOUNG ARTIST. Fresco painting, as a calling, demands for success a high degree of artistic talent. It is painting, with water colors, on specially prepared walls and ceilings, demanding an intimate knowledge of perspective and chiaro oscuro, and a mastery of drawing. On ceilings especially does the work task all the resources of drawing and effects. Most fresco painters in this country are Italians. A good artist in this line commands high wages—$100 per week often being paid.

ORLANDO M. G. We don't know the best time made by several of the horses you name, but these we can give: Toronto Chief (under saddle) 2:24¼; California Damsel, 2:24¼; Lady Blanchard, 2:24¼; Green Mountain Maid, 2:24¾; Nashville Girl, 2:24¾. The stallion, G. M. Patchen, junior, has made 2:23, and the horse, Commodore Vanderbilt, the same. The horse, Ethan Allen, we think never beat 2:25¼. This year's trotting has added magnificently to the turf time, proving, apparently, that our horses are becoming yearly *faster*. Goldsmith Maid has just made (at Hartford) the astonishing time of 2:14¼.

VIOLET D. asks: "Why cannot a lady ride horse-back alone in the city as well as in the country? Is there any impropriety in a young lady riding out with a married gentleman friend?" A young lady can ride alone in one place as well as another if she is independent enough to think so. There is no impropriety in riding alone, only it is not considered aristocratic. There is no impropriety in a lady riding with a married gentleman friend, *occasionally*, where all friends are agreeable to such an arrangement.

MARY V. H., Bristol, writes: "While attending a seminary I became acquainted with a young gentleman of excellent standing, and he paid me most particular attentions then, and on my return home for awhile. Lately he has treated me with continued silence. I long for an explanation, but feel delicate about asking it. We are engaged, so am I not entitled to know the reason of his changed conduct? How can I ascertain?" Ask your father, brother, or nearest relative to see the gentleman and seek an explanation. That is the proper way to do. You are certainly entitled to an explanation, and, if your friends fail you, it would not be amiss to write a ladylike, dignified note, to find how matters stand.

JEANNETTE AND GRACE. You cannot be too careful how you behave in public. If you give men the least encouragement to notice you, they will not be slow to follow up the advantage and address you. Treat all persons who show any familiarity with quiet contempt. A girl who will flirt with "ever so nice a young man" may be sure that that young man's strictures upon her to his acquaintances will not be to her credit. Young men amuse themselves making the acquaintance of girls upon the promenades and in public conveyances, but will never be apt to accord such acquaintances any respect, or to believe in their honesty of reputation.

JIMMIE DURLAND, Saybrook. When a gentleman excuses himself to a companion, and leaves, to probably meet again soon, only a bow is necessary from the person to whom the excuse is made. A gentleman always bows to persons saluting a friend with whom he is in company, but he does not bow when meeting those persons again unaccompanied by the friend whom they recognized.

BACHELOR, Providence, R. I., writes: "I have been acquainted for several years with a lady, who having refused to marry me, still remains one of my warmest friends. I wish to make her a present on her birthday next month, and I am puzzled how to select one she will not hesitate to accept. Jewelry she has refused before, and a book also, as too expensive." We should advise you in such a case to send a basket or bouquet of choice flowers. A lady can always accept flowers, and there is no gift that is more appropriate for a birthday offering. Select such as are fragrant and beautiful together, and have them tastefully arranged. A stand or hanging basket would also be graceful and appropriate, and no hesitation need be felt in accepting such a gift.

☞ *Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.*

THE MUSTERING OF THE DEAD.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

The moonlight drifted whitely down
Above the silent scene,
And gave the hills a silver crown,
And touched the slopes between.
I reined my horse beside the path,
And looked across the plain,
Where war's fierce sword had cut its way
Like scythe in ripened grain.

There, through a long and fearful day,
The battle's storm had swept
The bravest, truest men away,
For which sore hearts have wept.
All day our flag along the lines
Had flung upon the air
The rainbow of its tattered folds,
Defiant in despair.

And all along the lines that day
The dying soldiers said
The dear names of the ones they loved,
And then, ah! they were dead!
Where cannons' mighty thunder rung
Dismay to wrong and right,
What lease had men of life or love?—
What shield against the fight?

And now! how changed! I stood and gazed
Across the battle-plain,
Where lurid fires of death had blazed,
God grant not all in vain.
No cry rung out upon the night;
No whirr of flying shell;
No rifle-crack from hidden pit;
No charging shout or yell.

So, full of silent, wondering thought
I held my quiet steed
Where men had died when right was weak,
And stood in fearful need.
Then, dead and many dying men;
Now, moonlight over all,
With soldiers' graves on either hand—
A grim and gloomy wall.

The hours went by. The round red moon
Sailed down the western sky,
And hung on the horizon's rim,
A lurid, baleful eye.
I looked toward the silent north,
And saw the northern star
Proclaiming that the noon of night
Broke o'er the field of war.

What was that? On the silent air
Came the quick beat of drums;
I almost fancied I could hear
The hurtling of the bombs.
It was a wild, weird melody,
A strange and ghostly tune,
Played by some unseen drummer band
Beneath the harvest moon.

I started. On the pulsing air
A bugle's echoes broke,
And from their well-won, honored sleep
The soldier heroes woke.
Up from each lowly, grassy grave
A soldier's spirit rose,
And joined again the broken ranks
Which fought the nation's foes.

Adown the weird and ghostly line
I heard the war-drums beat,
And saw the phantom bayonets shine
Undimmed by a defeat.
I saw our torn and tattered flag
Upheld by phantom hands—
The flag of many victories,
If not of many lands.

The ghostly leaders galloped by
Along the silent line,
And in the moonlight's mellow rays
I saw their sabers shine.
The golden emblems which they wore
Flashed like the northern star.
Ah! how they flashed three years before
On that same field of war!

The war-drums ceased. A silence fell
Upon the phantom scene.
I listened for the shriek of shell,
And rifle-crack between.
How silent was the solemn night!
No sound to break the spell!
I shivered in a strange affright,
And whispered: Is it well?

Why stand these phantom leaders here,
Their faces northward turned?
Why rest they not? for rest by them
Was well and nobly earned.
What issue wait they from the North,
That calls them from their graves?
I fancied that some voice replied,
"*They want no land of slaves!*"

I heard a murmur far away;
It deep and deeper grew,
Like some old anthem, angel-sung,
One old, yet ever new.
Then on the strangely-throbbing air
Rung out a cannon-peal,
It throbbed among the hills, until
I felt them rock and reel.

There was a flutter of the flag;
The bayonets rose and fell,
And each white face was lifted up
In thanks unspeakable.
And out upon the quivering air
A cry rung o'er and o'er,
Until the stars shook, overhead—
"The Union evermore!"

The war-drums throbbed in stormy glee;
The bugles shrilly rang;
And in a harsher melody
I heard the cymbals clang.
Then came a hush. A phantom form
With stars upon his breast,
Cried out, "The land is free at last,
And we are free—to rest!"

A vapor drifted o'er the plain
One moment, and was gone.
I looked to see the flag again
Auroral as the dawn.
No flag!—no men! the silent field
Lay calmly in the night,
With all its gloomy soldier-graves,
Mementoes of the fight.

And then I knew the mystery.
The issues of the hour
Had called the warrior-sleepers up
In ghostly pomp and power.
Their loyal spirits could not rest
With liberty at stake,
And they were ready, at the word,
To battle for her sake.

God help us all! The right shall win!
Blood was not spilt in vain!
We see the triumph morn begin
Above the hills of Maine.
The spirits of our loyal dead
Are with us in our need,
And speak, through every loyal vote,
The words for us to heed—
"*The Union evermore!*"

DEADLY-EYE,
The Unknown Scout:
OR,
THE BRANDED BROTHERHOOD.

BY BUFFALO BILL,

THE CELEBRATED SCOUT, GUIDE, AND HUNTER-AUTHOR.

CHAPTER X.
PLOTTING MISCHIEF.

TEN days passed away after the arrival of the train in the new settlement, and the peninsula began to present a far different scene, for the settlers had also staked out their farms, chosen the sites of their cabin homes, and had pitched their tents until their houses could be built.

No contention, no envy existed among them, and the future promised brightly, as the whole male force daily worked upon the stockade fort, which was to be the common center of protection for all.

Several days after their arrival Major Belden and his troopers dashed into the new settlement and was greeted with pleasure by all, for the officer at once set his men to work aiding in building the stockade, and by many acts of kindness won the esteem of all the emigrants.

With this extra force the work went bravely on, and in two weeks' time the walls of the stockade were up, and the large cabin-fort was complete.

In those two weeks Major Belden had constantly haunted Sibyl Conrad with his presence, and the maiden's kindness toward him he construed into a reciprocity of his affection, and commenced building up hopes of making her his wife.

Whether Howard Talbot had changed in his love for Sibyl none knew, as he was ever pleasant toward her; but, certain it is that he appeared to relinquish in favor of the major, and suddenly became devoted to Ruth, who, in the absence of the Unknown Scout, was willing to accept the attentions of the young man.

The desolate cabin of Alfred Carter had become the home of Howard Talbot, with all its surroundings. The settlers having drawn lots for its possession, and he having been the lucky winner, he at once installed himself in his new residence, at the same time intimating that, ere long, he hoped to have a housekeeper to look after his affairs.

Thus glided away the days at the peninsula settlement, or "Riverside," as the settlers had named it, and still the Unknown Scout remained absent.

One evening, the day prior to the departure of Major Belden for the fort, whither he had ordered Captain La Clyde, the morning after his arrival in the settlement, that he might have no rivals in camp, the young cavalry officer suddenly rode up, followed by half a dozen dragoons.

"Well, La Clyde, what news from the fort?"

"Stirring times, major, and the general bids me tell you to report at once, as he wishes you to lead an expedition to the south."

"Indeed! Well, we will depart to-night."

"Pardon me, major, but General Canton bids me remain at the settlement until our friends have their cabins built and crops in, and I am to retain command of twenty of your men."

Major Belden frowned visibly at this news, and compressed his lips as though in anger; but he said nothing and walked off in search of Sibyl Conrad.

Soon he found her seated upon the river bank, a book in one hand, a fishing-rod in the other.

"Well, Miss Sibyl, seeking food for both body and mind, I see," he remarked, pleasantly, as he walked up.

"Yes, sir, and both are the most agreeable occupations I could be engaged in."

"Indeed; I thought that you would be at least glad to see me, as I leave you to-morrow, or rather to-night, having been ordered to the fort to command a most dangerous expedition," and the officer gazed down into the beautiful upturned face to mark the effect of his words.

But Sibyl quietly replied:

"It is the glory of a soldier's life to participate in dangerous service; so I have been told."

"True, Miss Sibyl, and it is a soldier's duty to love, and also his pleasure, as I may safely say, for dearly do I love you. Pardon me, Sibyl, for thus abruptly speaking of this, to me, most important subject, but to-night I leave you upon a service from which I may never return, and if I fall, I would have you know that I loved you more than all else in this world. If my life is spared, then, Sibyl, I beg you promise me to one day be my wife."

Major Belden had spoken earnestly, and apparently with deep feeling, but, neither his words nor manner had touched the heart of Sibyl Conrad, who, rising from the bank, replied:

"Major Belden, you surprise and pain me by your words, for I have no love to give you, and never can have, though I shall ever regard you most kindly as a friend."

"Curse your friendship, Sibyl Conrad!" hissed forth the humiliated and disappointed man, and, wheeling quickly, he strode from the spot, leaving the maiden more surprised by this new phase in his character than by his declaration of love.

A half-hour more and Major Belden rode forth from the settlement, his brow dark and lips compressed with internal emotion.

As he reached the edge of the prairie he suddenly came upon Howard Talbot, and bidding his men ride slowly on, he called to the young man, and when they halted side by side, he said:

"Mr. Talbot, can I ask if you had a rival what would be your course with him?"

Howard Talbot looked surprised, but replied almost fiercely:

"I would overreach him by fair or foul means, even were he my brother!"

"We think alike, Mr. Talbot. Now, let me ask you what regard you have for that prairie rover known as Deadly-Eye."

"None whatever, sir."

"Well, he is my rival."

"Then court-martial him for the crimes it is said he has committed, and hang him to the nearest tree."

"Good advice, sir, and I will follow it; Mr. Talbot, it will give me pleasure to see you at the fort as my guest, and I think together we can overreach the Unknown Scout. Good-day, sir."

"Good-day, Major Belden."

On dashed the major, and with a strange smile upon his face, Howard Talbot rode on, muttering to himself:

"Yes, he sees I do not like the Unknown Scout, and I will use him as a tool to rid me of my dangerous rival, for that Sibyl loves him I know. Then, my gallant major, when you have removed the scout from my path, I'll devote my attention to you and that handsome captain, for all that cross my love-trail must die, and arrow or rifle-shot from the covert of a motte will easily make those two officers food for wolves. Now I must go on and improve my time with the lovely Sibyl, who is the cause of so much mischief," and putting spurs to his horse he dashed on, to find upon his arrival at the stockade that the coast was not wholly clear, for the handsome face and form of Percy La Clyde was visible, sitting by the side of Sibyl Conrad.

With a smothered curse, Howard Talbot turned away, and the next moment met Ruth Whitfield with one of his sweetest smiles.

"Well, Talbot, one of your rivals has just gone," said Ruth, with a malicious smile.

"True, and left another even more dangerous; but, it is the Unknown Scout that I fear in that quarter most."

"Yes, and it is he that *I* fear will be lost to me through her artful ways."

"Leave that to me, Ruth Whitfield, as I have before told you. You and I understand each other thoroughly. I love Sibyl Conrad, and you love Deadly-Eye; now we will plot that he be removed out of the way until I can marry her, and—"

"But no harm must befall him, Talbot, or you will find me revengeful," sternly said the maiden.

"Leave that to me: he shall be captured and taken to a distant tribe of Indians, whom I know well, and held there until I marry Sibyl, and then he shall be allowed to escape, and it will depend upon you whether or not you become his wife."

"She will not marry you if she believes him alive."

"No; he must be reputed dead, and that I will arrange; so give yourself no fear on that score."

"I cannot help it, Talbot. Do you know that love for that man has altered my entire nature, and I would take life if it stood between him and I," and the glitter of Ruth Whitfield's eyes proved that she spoke the truth.

"No need of that; all will come right in the end; only be my strong ally in all I ask you to do."

"I will say black is white if it but gains my ends," recklessly said the handsome, but love-maddened, woman, as she arose and walked toward her aunt who was approaching.

"Well, I am playing a deep game, but I will win. Yet I do not like her talking of revenge if harm befall Deadly-Eye; but I must risk her vengeance, and I will be willing to, after I make Sibyl my wife. I can lie to Ruth and say an Indian killed the Scout to revenge himself for the death of some of his kindred whom Deadly-Eye had slain. Yes, all will come right; it *must* come right, or I am ruined, and Many-Faces, as the Indians call me, will have to pass in his checks, or get out of this prairie country.

CHAPTER XI.
BEARDED IN HIS DEN.

In his private quarters of the fort sat General Canton, the commandant of the chain of forts upon the far frontier.

He was engaged in reading dispatches just arrived, and his brow was dark, his look troubled, as though the news therein contained was not pleasant.

Around the general were signs of comfort, and even luxury, for that Far Western post, for his quarters were well furnished, and books and musical instruments were there with which pleasantly to while away leisure moments.

Touching a small bell, an orderly soon appeared at the door.

"See if Major Belden is sufficiently recovered from his fatiguing trip to come to me."

"Yes, sir," and the orderly disappeared to return in a few moments with the information that the major would come at once.

Soon after the major put in an appearance at the general's quarters, and was motioned to a seat.

"Major, I am really pleased with your trip, and I feel certain that those Indians on the Southern Agency will behave, at least for a few months; but I sent for you to learn what was the information you had regarding that desperado, known as Deadly-Eye?"

"I have information that should hang him, sir; for years he has led a wild and reckless life, coming from none knew where, and to this day not a man on the frontier knows his name, or the mystery that surrounds him."

"He has committed several murders, I believe?"

"Yes, sir; he shot two soldiers a year or two since, and what for Heaven only knows. He has shot down Indians by the score, and I blieve is in league with some of the hostile bands, and also with the Branded Brotherhood."

"Yet he has done a number of noble deeds, I have heard."

"They have had that appearance, general; but, there has been some underhand reason for it, I assure you. Now, on my return from the southward, as I told you this morning, I passed by the new settlement of Riverside, to see if they longer needed the service of Captain La Clyde, and all of a sudden the Unknown Scout appeared, after an absence of four weeks on some pretended trail, and demanded that I should let him have a dozen soldiers to accompany him upon some trip, which he pretended would rescue a young girl from captivity. I considered it some trap to lead my men into, and told him so, when he deliberately knocked me down. See, sir, here is the bruise on my left cheek!"

"He was most impertinent and daring, major."

"Yes, general; and I arose and rushed upon him with my sword, when, as quick as a flash, he wrested it from my grasp, broke it, and hurled me from him with a strength I believed no man capable of."

"The daring desperado! What did you then, major?"

"I ordered the men to seize him, but he hurled them aside, drew his revolvers and strode right through their line, and I then ordered them to fire upon him, but Captain La Clyde, half a dozen of the settlers and Miss Conrad threw themselves in front of him, and the troopers could not obey, and, mounting his horse, the coward rode away."

"Not a *coward*, major; he is certainly not that, as bad as he is," said the general.

"Yes, sir, he is a coward—"

"*And you are a liar, Major Belden!*"

The sudden reply, breaking into the conversation in a stern, deep voice, caused both General Canton and his officer to spring to their feet and glance toward the poor.

There, just inside the portal, stood none other than Deadly-Eye, the Unknown Scout, his eyes blazing, and fixed upon Major Belden with a menacing light.

"What! ho! the guard! orderly!" yelled the startled officer, and again the deep voice of the Scout was heard.

"There stands one outside that door who would give up his life at my word, so you call in vain. One cry more from your lips and you are a dead man."

Then, turning to the commander, the Scout continued:

"General Canton, I did not come here, sir, to beard the lion in his den, but to meet you face to face as man to man, and give the lie to all that has been said against me, sir. Will you spare me a moment of your time?"

"With a revolver staring me in the face, sir, I see no choice, did I decide otherwise," replied the general, with perfect coolness.

"I will lower my weapon, sir; but, by the God above, if any motion to betray me is made, I will slay the man that attempts it. I came here voluntarily, to say that never have I raised a hand against the United States troops on this border, who did not first attack me."

"You slew two soldiers who once attempted your arrest, I learn."

"I slew two drunken soldiers who had boasted that they would take me alive and hang me without trial; they rushed upon me without orders from their officers. I warned them back; they would not heed the warning, and I shot them dead. You were not in command here then, sir, and heard only a garbled account of the affair from such as yonder man, who wears a major's straps, which I will yet tear from his shoulders if he crosses my path with evil intent."

"You speak boldly, Sir Scout."

"I know it, general; it is a habit I have. Regarding my killing of peaceable Indians, it is all a lie, though I make war upon all hostile bands. Now, sir, I desire to state why I sought you here: first to give the lie to all assertions against me such as have been brought to your ears, and then to say that upon arriving at the new settlement, whither I guided the Conrad emigrant-train, I saw with horror that a cruel enemy had been there, and left ruin and death behind, for Alfred Carter, his wife and son had been murdered, and his daughter, a beautiful girl of eighteen, had been carried off into captivity. Taking the trail of the bloodhounds, after days of tedious work, I tracked them to their kennel, and found that Ricardo, the chief of the Branded Brotherhood, had done the deed."

"Infamous!"

"Well may you say so, General Canton; but, to continue: I tracked the renegades to their den, three days' journey from here, and for over two weeks endeavored in some way to get possession of the maiden, but in vain. At length, however, I disguised myself, and by night entered the stronghold, and sought the cabin where the young girl was held a prisoner."

"You were most daring, sir."

The scout smiled quietly, and replied:

"I risk life every day, general. From Rose Carter I learned that Ricardo was off on another raid, and only a few of his men were in camp; also that she was too ill to then leave; so I returned to the settlement, and meeting there Major Belden, begged for a few men to return with me. He refused, and insulted me, and I promptly knocked him down."

"Served him right," responded General Canton, who, astonished at the magnificent appearance and noble face of the man whom all called a desperado, and won over by his bold daring and frank manner, was rapidly leaning to his side. Before, he had believed the Unknown Scout some burly outlaw, a brute in appearance and acts.

"Thank you, general. I then left the settlement by forcing my way through the soldiers; and, returning to the outlaw stronghold, succeeded in effecting the escape of Rose Carter, who was greatly improved in health by the thought of leaving Ricardo's hated presence."

"She is free, then?"

"Yes, general; she is now in this fort, whither I brought her, half an hour since, for we were hotly pursued by the Branded Brotherhood."

"The deuce you were! Well, I will lead my men at once against them," said the commandant, eagerly.

"Hold, general! I have already seen Captain La Clyde, and, by this time, he has a troop ready. It was through his kindness I found you here, and the orderly outside of your door is a man whose life I have twice saved, and he bade me enter and clear my character, which Major Belden was defaming. Now, general, if you will just give an order to see that poor Miss Carter is comfortably looked after, I will guide you in pursuit of Ricardo and his men."

"Miss Carter shall be the guest of my wife, Sir Scout, and I will at once follow you. Major Belden, you have, for some reason, I am certain, misrepresented this man's character to me, sir, for I am confident he speaks the truth. Be more careful in future, and until my return hold command of the fort. Come, Scout."

So saying, the general walked from his quarters out into the court of the fort, where Captain La Clyde's troop of horse was drawn up ready for the march.

Presenting the general to Rose Carter, whose beautiful face was most sad-looking and pale with fatigue, the kind officer at once conducted her to the apartments of his wife, and returning soon after mounted his horse, and with the Unknown Scout by his side, and Percy La Clyde and his troop following, dashed rapidly away from the fort, leaving the crestfallen major swearing hatred and revenge upon all who crossed him, from the general down to the drummer boy.

(*To be continued—commenced in No.* 287.)

Love in a Maze:
OR,
THE DEBUTANTE'S DISENCHANTMENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET,

AUTHOR OF "ALIDA BARRETT, THE SEWING-GIRL," "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," ETC.

CHAPTER VI.
A RASH ACT.

THREE days passed, and the household was in mourning. Mrs. Stanley's transient improvement after that evening was delusive. Hopes were entertained that she would regain strength till two hours before the end came, and that was awfully sudden.

The blow fell on Olive most heavily.

She was stunned at first. The nurse could hardly prevail on her to quit the death chamber. When led into her own room, she sat for hours in a chill stupor. She did not weep; she gave no outward sign of the grief that had crushed her. She would not touch the breakfast or the lunch that was brought to her, and which the nurse begged her to eat. She would not taste the wine held to her lips. She seemed almost unconscious of the calamity that had turned the house into a place of gloom.

Mr. Sherman dined there, and sent up a request for Miss Weston to join him and Mr. Hamilton; but she refused to come. On the morning of the second day, a dirty card bearing the name of "Richard Lumley" was brought to her. She started when she looked at it, and then dropped it as if it had stung her; but she would not go down. She seemed roused, however, out of her abstraction. When the maid came with a tray, and again begged her to take food, she complied mechanically; ate a few mouthfuls, and drank a cup of tea; then asked for the key of the room in which her dead friend lay.

The nurse brought her the key, and took her to the door of the room; but Olive would not permit her to go in. "Leave me alone," she entreated, and she went in, and closed the door.

The room was dark from the closed blinds, but two of the gas-jets were alight. A rigid form lay upon the bed, covered with a snowy sheet. Olive went up to it, and reverently lifted the covering from the wan face. She touched the cold forehead; a shiver ran through her whole frame; and falling on her knees, she burst into a tempest of tears and sobs.

It was the wail of a heart bereaved of its only friend—its only hope. With passionate grief she apostrophized the lost one, and pleaded her own desolation. But the weeping did her good; it saved her brain from a pressure that might have killed her.

Hours passed. At last she rose and replaced the covering over the white, waxen face, on which she had pressed farewell kisses. She went out of the room, locking the door, in which she left the key, as she heard the maid coming up-stairs. She went into her own room, and took up Richard Lumley's card.

It seemed to remind her of a forgotten duty. "It shall be done," she repeated two or three times. "The letters shall not be seen by any human eye. I have the keys." She felt them, still attached to the ribbon. "But I must wait till they are gone—to-night."

When Mr. Sherman, after the dinner hour had passed, sent up again a request that she would come down, she went, and saw him in the drawing-room. He wished to consult her upon the arrangements for the funeral. Mr. Hamilton had left everything to her judgment. He had been absent all day, and had left word that he would not return that night, though he would be in the city early on the following day, and would attend his deceased relative to the cemetery. He had sent his respects and condolences to Miss Weston, and had begged her to order everything according to her own wishes.

The details of the sad ceremony were speedily settled, and Mr. Sherman charged himself with carrying them out. This he did as an old friend; another legal adviser, consulted frequently of late, Mr. Reynolds, having claimed to represent Mrs. Stanley's interests. Sherman did not precisely understand what he meant; but all would soon be made clear. It would not be proper for either to enter on business matters till after the funeral.

At ten o'clock Mr. Sherman took leave, and the house was still. Olive saw the nurse going up to bed, as she left the drawing-room. The other servants had retired.

The girl took up her candle—for the lights were out in the hall—and descended to the library.

The room was large and lofty, but well warmed by the fire which yet burned cheerfully in the grate. Olive turned the key in the door by which she entered, and glanced timidly around the room, looking well into corners where the shadows lurked. Then she went to the Indian cabinet, and set her candle upon a marble stand near it.

She opened the door and the drawer with her keys, took out the drawer and felt for the secret spring. A narrow compartment flew out, full of papers. The packet of letters was there, but upon them lay a fresh one, addressed "to Olive Weston," in Mrs. Stanley's handwriting.

The girl took this letter and opened it.

Yes; it was addressed to her. The first sentence, "You will read this, darling Olive, when I am no more," quickly arrested her attention.

The letter had been written to explain Mrs. Stanley's reasons for the latest will she had made—bequeathing the bulk of her property to Olive Weston.

The letter nearly fell from the girl's hand as she read this. "To me!" she repeated, bewildered.

She had to collect her thoughts before reading further. This bequest, Mrs. Stanley stated, had been made in the hope of bringing about the union she had so ardently desired, between her nephew and the daughter of her love. "I know that in heart you belong to each other," the letter continued, "but you are opposed to Claude's wishes, on account of a scrupulous feeling that fortune has lifted him above you. Therefore I bestow the advantage of wealth upon you, my child. You alone can make Claude happy, and you will accept him when you can bring him fortune. He has therefore only a small legacy. He must receive from your dear hand the riches I have always meant should be his. And you, dearest girl, will not thwart my design. From the world unseen, if permitted, I shall come to you, and bless my united children."

Like a statue in marble stood the girl when she had finished reading the letter. Her face was white and set; a kind of horror seemed frozen in its expression. She—the heiress! Claude disinherited for her! He—who cared not for her—reduced to the alternative of bitter poverty, or accepting his own from her hand! Then a tide of crimson swept over her face. She seemed to hear his voice protesting against the cruel injustice; she seemed to hear him say he preferred poverty to a chain binding him to an unloved wife.

Quickly she turned again to the receptacle of papers, and drew out a bulky-looking document. It was labeled "Last Will and Testament of Maude Stanley," and bore a recent date.

Yes—that was the will. She tore it open with trembling hands, and read it through.

An annuity—five hundred dollars—was left to Claude Hamilton—named as the testator's "dear nephew"—and the residue, in real estate and money invested in bonds and mortgages, was bequeathed to herself!

This was the will which, in a day or two, when the funeral was over, would be brought forth by the lawyers, and proved in court; and she would find herself in possession of all, and Claude deprived of his inheritance, and driven from his home to labor for his bread.

Would he accept his birthright as the price of his liberty; would he stoop to ask her to marry him because she was enriched by the spoil torn from him? Or would she lower herself to say that all might be restored to him on the condition prescribed by his aunt?

"Oh, how mistaken! how wrong!" she exclaimed. "How could he be happy, forced to marry one he despises? He, who loves and is plighted to another! And if I resigned all to him, he would not accept it as my gift! No—he would go, and welcome poverty. This shall not—shall not be! If there is no will—did not Mr. Sherman say Claude would inherit everything? Then there is the will he drew up, leaving all to him! That will be found!"

She walked swiftly across the room, and laid the bulky paper on the fire. It was scorched and shriveled with the heat, and presently burst into flame. Olive watched it till it was consumed into light ashes.

She looked up, as if invoking the spirit of her benefactress to witness and approve what she had done.

The letter to herself, too, must be destroyed! She took it up, and the packet of California letters, and threw them into the grate. When they were all reduced to ashes, she stirred them with the poker, that no trace of her work might remain. Then she replaced the secret compartment and drawer, and left the library. Conscious that she had done but her duty, she felt peace in her heart, and retired to tranquil repose.

CHAPTER VII.
THE STARTLING DISCOVERY.

THE funeral was over, and Olive had made all her preparations for removal; but Mr. Sherman insisted on her departure being deferred till the reading of the will. He was confident that some provision had been made for her.

On the morning of the second day after the funeral, the two lawyers and Claude Hamilton were in consultation in the library. The most diligent search, the day before, had failed to discover any will.

"It is very strange," Mr. Reynolds was saying. "I drew up a will for the old lady scarce six weeks ago; it was duly executed, and she took charge of it herself. It must be among her papers."

"Do you remember its provisions?" asked Mr. Sherman.

"I remember them, but Mrs. Stanley's special request was that I should never speak of them to any one."

"But if we cannot find the document—"

"The more reason I should keep silence. She may have changed her mind and destroyed the will. It was an eccentric one, and mischief might have been made, had its provisions become known."

"Have you looked in that?" asked Hamilton, pointing to the Indian cabinet.

"No—did she keep papers there?"

"She did, and always had it locked. Let us send for the keys."

This was done. The housekeeper found the keys in Mrs. Stanley's escritoir, where Olive had put them, after fulfilling her friend's last request.

Claude opened the cabinet, and pulled out one drawer after another. They were full of old relics and curiosities; but no papers of importance were found. Then he remembered having heard his aunt say there was somewhere a secret receptacle, opening with a spring. He took them some time to find this; but when revealed, it contained nothing like what they sought.

"Plainly she has destroyed the late will of which you spoke," Claude said to Mr. Reynolds.

The gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

"I thought it as likely as not she would," he said. "It was a foolish idea of hers, and to humor it went against my inclination. I am glad she thought better of it."

Mr. Sherman fancied that in the last will she had left a large part of her fortune to the returned convict, and was of the same opinion as the other lawyer. There was but one way of disposing of what she had to leave, he opined, glancing at young Hamilton.

"We must fall back, then, on the will I drew up some three years since," he remarked. "Was that placed in your charge, Mr. Reynolds?"

"I was not here at the time, you remember. I came from the South, after the death of my late partner, Mr. Brandon Hall."

"True; then he had it in charge."

"There was a fire, you know, a month before his death, and his premises were burned. The loss—for he was not fully insured—was a heavy blow to him; I always thought it killed him. His papers were consumed, except a deed-box one of the clerks saved. But Mrs. Stanley's leases and mortgages were not among his papers. She kept them in a box of her own at the —— Bank."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Sherman, beginning to pace the room. "The will was not among those! It must have been burned!"

A silence fell on the group.

"Send for Miss Weston," at length suggested Mr. Reynolds. "She may know something of the last will."

A servant was dispatched to request the presence of Miss Weston and the housekeeper.

The latter was closely questioned, but had no knowledge of her mistress having hidden or destroyed any papers. Olive evaded the inquiries made of her; she had not been in Mrs. Stanley's confidence as to her disposition of the property; indeed, Mr. Reynolds testified that the testatrix had been particularly anxious that she should know nothing.

When she heard Mr. Sherman say that no will could be found, she turned with a smile to Mr. Hamilton, and held out her hand.

"I would congratulate you, Mr. Hamilton," she said, with dignity, "were not the occasion so mournful; but you will allow me at least to say I rejoice in the knowledge that you are the inheritor of all your aunt's possessions."

"Yes;" echoed Mr. Reynolds, "as heir-at-law, he is master of all. He must take out letters of administration."

"I suppose so," added Sherman. "The fellow who came here the other day, and claimed near relationship, is of no consequence. The lady never acknowledged him."

"Any legacies named, Mr. Sherman, in the will you drew up, and your fees as executor, I shall be happy to allow. You were named as executor, I understand?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"I was, certainly. And I remember all the provisions. But that will may not have expressed Mrs. Stanley's latest wishes."

He glanced at Olive, who sat in a chair in the corner, her eyes fixed on her mourning-dress, the folds of which swept the carpet.

A servant entered hastily, and brought in a card on a tray, which he presented to Mr. Sherman.

"Richard Lumley," repeated the lawyer, reading it.

A shabbily-dressed man had followed the servant, and now pushed into the room, hat in hand. Sherman recognized him at once for the disreputable individual who had once before called, demanding to see Mrs. Stanley.

Olive looked up, and her face blanched with a vague terror. She knew the intruder had some sort of a claim upon her benefactress; for she had known of his receiving money on demand more than once during her last illness.

The housekeeper, too, knew him, as the person to whom she had given what her mistress sent. But neither said a word.

The strange man had now shuffled fairly into the room. The servant stood behind him, as if waiting for the order he supposed was coming, to show the intruder the door.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Sherman, without any sign of recognition. "May I ask your business, sir? We are not receiving visitors."

"I know that very well," rejoined the stranger, turning round his hat in his hands. "You are having a meeting on business, and are puzzled that no will has been found."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh, I have sources of information. I have a lawyer, too, in my pay; and I come here by his advice, to ask you plump—is there a will, or did the old lady die without one?"

The two lawyers whispered together.

"We can answer no questions put by a stranger, unless he proves his right to ask," replied Mr. Reynolds.

"Well—I have a right, and can prove it and my interest."

"What do you know about a will?"

"I only know that if she made one without giving her only brother his share—and that is the whole—she did a mighty mean thing."

"Silence, sir!" said Mr. Sherman. "You may leave the room, if you use such language."

Young Hamilton advanced a step or two, a flash in his eyes, as if he would expedite the departure of the intruder.

The man coolly drew a chair forward, and seated himself, depositing his hat on the floor.

"You will find I am not to be frightened from my claims," he said, with an air of dogged determination. "I may turn the tables on you all presently."

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Reynolds.

"I sent in my card. My name is Richard Lumley, and the late Mrs. Stanley was my half-sister."

Mr. Sherman turned to Mr. Reynolds.

"I need not remind you," he said, in a low, impressive tone, "that this kind of imposition is often practiced. Any stranger might walk in, and assert himself a relation."

"But he might not be able to bring such things as a certificate of birth and baptism—eh! or a bundle of letters from the deceased, or other proofs that will stop your mouth, and teach you manners, my fine fellow!" put in the stranger, insolently.

Hamilton strode up and seized the man by the shoulder.

"If you cannot behave with decency," he cried, "you shall not remain in this house."

"Oh, ho! my cock-of-the-walk," retorted the intruder. "I don't wonder you want to be rid of me! But it's no go! I'll knock all your pretensions into smash, with my proofs, in a minute or two."

"Bring out your proofs, then, and hold your tongue!"

"I have them here—at least the copies; the originals are in my attorney's strong-box. I've been getting up the case on the sly all this time," with a leer at Sherman. "I'll trust you with the copies."

He drew a bundle of papers from his pocket, filed and labeled in legal fashion.

"And supposing it does turn out"—remarked the elder lawyer—"that you are what you pretend to be; you prove yourself a—"

"A knave, you would say; and a convict to the back of that! You have heard of me, I find! Well, I'm not ashamed of the State prison odor that hangs about me! My sister's money can make away with all that, and turn me out a perfumed exquisite, as dainty as this strutting young rooster, who has pecked in her barnyard so long—oh!"

Olive was gazing in a trance of horror at this man; now she shuddered with a tremor from head to foot. The idea that she had done something terrible, which she could not undo, first dawned on her apprehension.

"Now where's the use," proceeded the self-confessed convict, "of shuffling off or shirking responsibilities? Best let me send for my legal adviser, and settle the matter at once. Here I stand for my rights—"

"A villain and a convict—" muttered young Hamilton, with a groan of dismay.

"Exactly; I don't want to shirk the truth. I have no objection to sketching my history for you. After my sister Maude's marriage to John Stanley, a coolness fell between us; he never forgave a little practical joke of mine, by which I tricked his bankers into paying a check for three thousand dollars, that he never drew."

"You were guilty of forgery!" exclaimed Claude.

"You must allow it hard that my brother by marriage should make a fuss about such a trifle; but he did! I went to California. I had a jolly time there before I got into trouble. Well—I won't go into particulars on that head. I saw the inside of a prison more years than I care to remember. I served out my time honestly; and see, my reward at last! The persecuting brother-in-law amasses a large fortune; he dies and leaves it to his widow, who obligingly does the same, leaving no will; and the coast is clear for me to walk in and take possession of the whole!"

The thrill of disgust at the chuckle which followed this speech went through every one present. Sherman was first to recover himself.

"You are reckoning without your host, sir," he said, sternly. "Even supposing you able to prove yourself the relative who was a shame and disgrace to my late respected client, whose existence she concealed, and whom she never recognized, that would not place you in possession of all her property! A brother can inherit but half while there is a nephew."

"Where is the 'nephew?'" asked the man, a hideous leer of triumph in his bronzed face.

Sherman nodded toward young Hamilton.

"He the nephew!"

"Certainly. Mrs. Stanley had a sister as well as a brother."

"I grant that."

"The sister married Mr. Hamilton, a respectable merchant of this city; though he was not fortunate in business. This young man is the son of Mrs. Hamilton."

Richard Lumley threw himself back in his chair, and laughed long and loudly.

Only when Claude came up threateningly, as resolved to turn him out of the room, did he recover himself.

"Don't put yourself in a passion, young fellow!" he said. "You have a certificate of your birth, I suppose!"

"That is not necessary," interposed Sherman. "On the death of her sister, who had been a widow two years, Mrs. Stanley adopted her son—her own nephew—and educated him. His home was always at her house."

"Her own nephew! ha! ha! That is the point of the joke that tickles me!" ejaculated the ex-convict, again indulging in a fit of laughter, but checking it soon. "And you were all led by the nose! I will let you into the truth. Mr. Hamilton, who married Maude's sister and mine, had another wife before he married her!"

"And you dare insinuate—" began Claude. The other interrupted him.

"Nothing of the sort, young man; I stick to facts. Hamilton's first wife was safe under the sod before he married sister Lucy. The first wife left an infant, and Lucy, who never had any children of her own, loved it as if she had borne it. You were that engaging little cherub, my boy!"

Again the silence of consternation fell on all present.

"When Hamilton brought his wife to New York, after his failure in Cincinnati, you passed as her child. When she was dying, she made a solemn request to sister Maude, that you should never know, nor should any one from whom the secret could be kept, that she was not your own mother."

"You must prove these assertions, sir! your word goes for nothing," said the elder lawyer.

"Proofs shall be forthcoming; and when I have demolished your claim, then I will clear you all out of this house. You need not look for me to support you, young sir."

"Keep a good heart, dear friend!" whispered Sherman to Claude, who was leaning on one end of the mantelpiece, his hand shading his forehead. "This man's story will not bear the light, I am assured."

"Will you glance at these papers, gentlemen?" asked Richard Lumley, turning over those he had brought, and laid on the table. "Certified copies, you will see. The originals are in my strong-box, at Arnold, Blake & Co's. And, strange enough, I've a Cincinnati man who remembers all the particulars of that amiable young man's history. Quite a romance, is it not? His adoption—his ignorance of his real parentage—my sister's late act of justice in dying intestate, and my walking into her entire fortune in spite of you all! ha! ha! I will leave the documents with you; there's no risk; they're only copies, you see. I shall bring my legal adviser to dinner!" And with a mocking bow, he shuffled out of the room.

Olive had started from her seat when the fatal truth was disclosed, and its full meaning burst on her tortured brain. Vainly she had struggled, through the scene that had just passed, for strength to speak, and tell what she had done. But she knew not how to begin. No one but the housekeeper noticed how deathly white her cheeks and lips had grown; how she staggered as she tried to move; till just as the man who claimed everything passed from the room, she gave a wild, gasping cry, and fell on the floor in a dead swoon.

The others rushed to her assistance. Claude raised her in his arms, and bore her to a sofa at the end of the library. The housekeeper ran for water, and Sherman, with an exclamation of pity and regret that she had been overtasked in her weakness, helped to chafe her hands.

"We had better have her taken up to her room," he said, when the housekeeper returned. "This scene has tried her too severly. Poor girl! she has been so devoted to our deceased friend!"

"She has scarcely slept a night this week!" exclaimed the good woman. "No wonder her nerves broke down. Let me carry her, sir. She is light as a child."

But Claude Hamilton would not permit her to lift the insensible girl. He raised her in his arms, and followed the housekeeper to Olive's chamber.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EARLY FRIENDS AGAIN TOGETHER.

Two days later, a private carriage stopped before the door of the house in West Forty-second street. Out of it stepped a lady, richly though quietly dressed, and ascended the steps to ring the door-bell.

She asked for Miss Weston, and was told she was not well enough to receive any visitor. But she persisted; giving her card to the servant, and saying she would wait in the parlor till he brought the young lady's answer.

In a few minutes the man returned, and begged the lady to walk up-stairs. Miss Weston would see her in her own room.

Once more the friends, who figured in the first part of our story, were clasped in each other's arms. Ruhama in the bloom of health and beauty; Olive, pale, wasted, dejected. In the months that had passed, how much had occurred to both, which the other was anxious to know!

"I have come for you, Olive," Ruhama said, when they had talked awhile. "I shall take you home with me."

"Ruhama!"

"Oh, I know what you would say—I am too gay for a mourner like yourself! My dear, I am one of the disconsolates at present. My husband is away, and my house is the picture of desolation."

"General Marsh absent! But he will soon return, and I should be a blot on the gayety of the scene."

"No, he will not return in such haste. To let you into a secret I would not hint to any one else, we have had a little misunderstanding."

"Oh, Ruhama!"

"Do not leap to the conclusion that I am to blame; for I am not. You must know, he is one of the most jealous men in existence."

"Is it possible?"

"He confessed to me, before our marriage, that he could easily be driven mad with jealousy. But I gave him no cause, and we have been a pair of turtle-doves all these months. But the other night I went to Mrs. Lyndon's party, and met Emily St. Clare, who gave me the miniature her brother had promised me for my wedding, of himself, painted by my cousin. The demon of jealousy had inspired the General to follow me secretly, and spy out any flirtation in which I might indulge. He saw me receive the miniature and put it in my pocket. He has always had a suspicion of Wyndham. He took me into the conservatory after supper, snatched the picture out of my pocket, abused me shamefully, and told me I should go home alone."

"How dreadful! But he was soon penitent?"

"He did not come home that night, and I have not seen him since."

"Write to him, Ruhama; tell him how he has wronged you!"

"My dear, I do not know where he has gone! I said to him all I could: that Wyndham had been like a brother, and all that; but he would not listen to me. No, Olive, I shall not write. He may get over his absurd pet as it pleases him. Meantime, I am all alone; and I don't like to go anywhere, or accept any invitations. People would make a talk, you know. I was thinking of you, when I saw Mrs. Stanley's death in the papers."

Olive pressed her hand to her eyes, aching from the tears they had shed.

"You must come with me. You have no idea of remaining here, of course?"

"Certainly not. I have had everything packed and ready to go, for three or four days."

"All right; come, then; and I will send for your luggage."

"I was going to a private house—Mrs. Van Brugh's—in Thirtieth street. It is the best place for me."

"No; the best place is with the old friend who needs you; whom your presence may save from some act of madness or folly. I am utterly disgusted with being alone; and my pride will not let me take blame I do not deserve. You shall be my guardian-angel; we will bear each other's burdens."

"I would not load you with mine, dear Ruhama."

"I have the burdens of two to bear, you know. Oh, Olive, never be persuaded to marry."

"I am not likely to be!"

"Can that be? and you in the same house with Claude Hamilton!"

"Hush, my friend! You must not link his name with mine. He is engaged; you must have heard of it?"

"Can that be true? And was the misunderstanding with you never healed up?"

"How could it be? Mr. Hamilton only lately returned from Europe—hardly three months since. I saw very little of him; I would have left this house when he came, but Mrs. Stanley would not hear of it; and she was so ill! I could be of use to her, and it was my duty to stay. Ah, I wish I had gone! I wish I had gone!"

The girl covered her face with her hands, and burst into a storm of passionate weeping.

"Come, child, you are sadly nervous!" said Mrs. Marsh, caressing her. "Where is your bonnet and mantle? You shall come with me, and I will cheer you up—downcast as I am."

"Oh, Ruhama, you do not know how miserable I am!"

"I know you have lost a loved friend—"

"And wronged him she loved; ruined him! He ought to hate me, and curse me!"

"I do not understand you, Olive! Have you done anything to injure Mr. Hamilton?"

"I have done him a fatal injury. I cannot undo it. Confession will not restore his right! Only the maddening remorse of guilt is left me!"

"I cannot imagine any evil you cannot remedy, as far as he is concerned. But you want counsel, Olive."

"I dare not seek it; they will not believe me if I confess!"

"Confess what? You are beside yourself, Olive!"

"If I could only die! But I could not even die in peace!" And the wretched girl wrung her hands in despair.

Mrs. Marsh heard steps at the door, and ran to open it. The maid was there, and in a whisper she asked her to bring Miss Weston's cloak and bonnet, and to put in her sachel such things as she might immediately want.

With her own hands Ruhama put on the things—vanquishing all resistance, and led the girl down-stairs, bidding the maid have the luggage ready when she should send for it.

Olive suffered herself to be placed in the carriage. She was utterly exhausted, and Ruhama held a bottle of salts to her nose, fearing she would faint. When they arrived at General Marsh's house, the servant was called to lift her out; but she declined assistance, and taking her friend's arm, went up the steps.

"I am quite well, Ruhama," she said; "it is only the mind that is sick—sick unto death."

Ruhama led her up-stairs to the beautiful room she had selected for her occupancy. It looked southward, and the golden sunshine illuminated the amber satin draperies of the windows. The carpet and upholstering were to match, and of rare elegance. A low French bed, covered with snowy linen with frilled pillow-cases, stood in the middle of one side; and there was a couch of amber satin, broad and soft, on which the tired guest was placed. A table, inlaid with different colored polished woods, stood by it, with a vase full of fresh flowers, and upon it were several of the latest publications in rich bindings.

"You must rest here now," said Ruhama. "I will read to you, or play for you, whenever you feel disposed; but you will be the better of a sleep, I think, after a little refreshment."

The maid brought in a tray, on which was a tempting lunch of broiled birds, thin bread and butter, a salad, fruits, wines, lemonade, etc.

It was soothing to the poor girl to be thus cared for. Her friend would not permit her to recur to her troubles, till after she had slept. They would take counsel together in the evening, and there must be some way out of the difficulty, which their sagacity, or that of some wiser friend, might discover in time.

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 281.*)

Victoria:

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETRIBUTION.

L'homme propose mais Dieu dispose! You know the proverb. Colonel Shirley was not the only one who had intended starting on a journey that morning, and was doomed to disappointment. Mr. Sylvester Sweet having settled all the affairs of the estate, and having nothing to do for the next month or two, intended in his bereavement to give himself a long holiday, and to go post-haste to Paris. Perhaps, too, being such an uncommonly tender-hearted gentleman, he did not wish to stay to witness the execution of his young friend, Tom Shirley—to drown his grief for the recent loss of his wife in the delights of that delightful city. At all events, whatever his motives, Mr. Sweet was going on a journey, and was sitting down to an early breakfast in the back parlor. Most elaborately was he got up; always radiant, he was considerably more so this morning than ever; his buff waistcoat had the gloss of spick-span newness, his breast-pin and studs were dazzling; the opal rings he wore on his fingers made you wink, his pocket-handkerchief was of the brightest yellow China silk, his Malacca cane had a gold head, his canary-colored gloves were as new as his waistcoat, and his watch-chain with its glistening ornaments, his yellow whiskers and hair, and white teeth gleamed out with more than ordinary brilliancy, and his smile was so bland and debonair, it would have done your heart good to see it. He had so far recovered from his late bereavement that he laughed a little silvery laugh as he sat down to breakfast—whether at it, or at his own cleverness, or at his expected two months' holiday, would be hard to say. So he was sitting, pleasantly sipping his Mocha, and eating his eggs and rolls, when the door-bell rung sharply; and two minutes after, Colonel Shirley stood in the doorway, regarding him. Mr. Sweet arose in a little surprise.

"Good-morning, colonel. This is an unexpected pleasure. I thought you were off in the six o'clock train?"

"I have been delayed! Will you be good enough to order your horse, and ride back with me to Castle Cliffe?"

"Certainly, colonel!" But Mr. Sweet hesitated a little, with his hand on the bell-rope. "I have purchased my ticket for London, but if the business is pressing—"

"It is most pressing! Order your horse immediately!"

Mr. Sweet knew better than to disobey the Indian officer when his dark eye flashed and his voice rung out in that wringing tone of command; so he ordered his horse, drew on his overcoat, and substituted buck-skin gloves for the yellow kids, with a little disappointment and a great deal of curiosity in his sallow face. But his unceremonious companion seemed no way inclined to satisfy curiosity, and was in a mood Mr. Sweet dared not question. So they mounted their horses, and drove through the town as rapidly as they had ridden once before, when on the search for Barbara. The storm had subsided, the rain had entirely ceased, but the wind still blew in long, lamentable blasts; and between his keeping his seat in the saddle and his hat on his head, Mr. Sweet had enough to do until Castle Cliffe was gained. And still, in grim silence, its master strode into the hall and into the morning-room, where that memorable inquest had been held, and where Mr. Sweet again found Mr. Channing, the magistrate, and the head doctor of the town. Lying on a long table, at the further end of the room, was something that looked like a human figure; but it was so muffled from sight, in a great cloak, that he could scarcely tell what to make of it. He turned from it to the others, and their stern faces and ominous silence sent a sudden and strange chill to his heart. Trying to look easy and composed, he pulled out his watch and glanced at it.

"Half-past seven! If the business is brief, perhaps I may be in time to catch the nine o'clock train yet."

"You need not trouble yourself about the nine o'clock train. You will not catch it!" said the colonel, frigidly.

"Excuse me! Of course I'm willing to wait any time you please! I merely thought it might have been some unimportant matter we had forgotten last night. A terrible night last night, gentlemen—was it not?"

No one spoke. Mr. Sweet felt as if their three pairs of eyes were three pairs of burning-glasses scorching into his very skin. At last:

"Your wife has returned, Mr. Sweet!" said the colonel, in a voice that thrilled with the same nameless terror to Mr. Sweet's inmost heart.

"Returned! When—where—how?"

"Last night, in the storm!"

"Good heaven! Alone?"

"Quite alone!"

"And where is she now?"

"She is here? Will you come and look at her!"

He walked toward the table whereon the muffled figure lay. Mr. Sweet, with his knees knocking together, followed. The muffling was removed, the dead face, livid and bruised, the dark eyes staring wide open, the white teeth gleaming behind the blue lips, as if she were grinning up at him a ghastly grin. It was an awful sight; and Mr. Sweet recoiled with a sort of shriek, and made a frantic rush for the door. But a man in a blue coat and brass buttons, the captain of the Cliftonlea police, stood suddenly between him and it, and laid his hand forcibly on his shoulder.

"Not so fast, Mr. Sweet! You are my prisoner!"

That brought Mr. Sweet to his senses faster than cold water or smelling salts. He stood stock-still and looked at the man.

"What?"

"Just so, sir. You are my prisoner! I arrest you for the murder of Leicester Cliffe!"

The shock was so sudden, so unexpected; his nerves were so unstrung by the appalling sight he had just seen, that his self-control left him. His sallow face turned to a blue white, his eyes seemed starting, he stood there paralyzed, glaring at the man. Then, with a yell that was more like the cry of a wild beast than anything human, he dashed his clenched fist into the constable's face, tore him from the door, rushed out, and into the arms of Mr. Peter Black, who stood airing his eye at the keyhole. There was another screech, wilder than the first—an appalling volley of oaths, and then Mr. Black's hand was twisted in Mr. Sweet's canary-colored necktie, and Mr. Sweet was black in the face, and foaming at the mouth. Then he was down, and Peter Black's knee was on his breast, and the lawyer's eyes bursting from their sockets, and the blood flowing from his mouth, nose and ears, but the others crowded round, and were tearing the avenger off. Not in time, however; for a murderous clasp-knife, with which the returned transport was wont, in days gone by, to slice his bread and beef was out, and up to the hilt in the lawyer's breast. The hot blood spouted upon his face as he withdrew the blade; but they flung him off, and the constable lifted the bleeding form from the ground.

"I have done it!" said Mr. Black, whose own face was purple, and whose teeth were clenched. "I swore I would, and now you may hang me as soon as you like!"

Both were brought back into the morning-room. Mr. Black, like a perfect lamb, offering no resistance, and Mr. Sweet, altogether unable to do so. He lay a ghastly spectacle in the arms of the constable, catching his breath in short gasps, and the life blood pumping out of the wound with each one.

"Lay him down on this sofa," said the doctor, "and stand out of the way until I examine the wound."

Mr. Sweet was not insensible. As they laid him down and the doctor bent over him, he fixed his protruding eyes on that functionary's face with an intensely eager look. The examination soon ended, the doctor arose and shook his head dismally.

"It's of no use—the wound is fatal! If you have anything to say, Mr. Sweet, you had better say it at once, for your hours are numbered!"

Mr. Sweet's face, by no earthly possibility, could turn more ghastly than it was; so he only let his head fall back with a hollow groan, and lay perfectly motionless. Mr. Channing, with a business-like air, drew up a seat and sat down beside him.

"You have heard what the doctor says, Sweet! You had better make a clean breast of it before you go!"

Another hollow groan was Mr. Sweet's answer. All his spirits seemed to have fled, leaving nothing behind but most abject terror.

"Out with it, Sweet! it may ease your conscience! We will send for a clergyman, if you like!"

"No, it would be of no use! he could do me no good! Oh-oh-oh!" Another prolonged and dismal groan.

"Commence, then, at once—do one act of justice before you die! It was you who murdered Leicester Cliffe—was it not?" said Mr. Channing, briskly producing note-book and pencil.

"It was! It's of no use denying it now!"

"Why did you do it?" What was your motive?"

"Jealousy! I heard him urging my wife to elope with him. I was mad with jealousy, and I followed and killed him!"

"You came here directly after the murder?"

"I did."

"Would you have let Tom Shirley hang for your crime?"

"How could I help it? Either he or I must hang for it! Oh-oh-oh-oh!" Another prolonged groan.

"You've been a nice hypocrite!" said Mr. Channing, taking notes rapidly. "Is this other story about your wife having been the daughter of Colonel Shirley quite true?"

"It is—every word of it!"

"Not every word! You knew it all along, of course?"

"Yes!"

"You said you didn't, though. And Miss Vivia is really the daughter of that man at the door?"

"Yes—curse him!" cried Mr. Sweet, with momentary fury; "and he is an escaped transport; and you know what the penalty of that is?"

"I know very well! Another thing, Mr. Sweet, Black mentioned, while the colonel was absent fetching you, that before you struck Leicester Cliffe, a mysterious voice arose from the grave and told him his doom was come, or

wan and wasted to a degree. Sister Anastasia takes a card out of her pocket, and hands it to the young lady, who becomes livid crimson the moment she looks at it, and who covers her face with her hands, and turns away even from the averted eyes of the portress. "He is in the parlor," Sister Anastasia says with phlegm, and goes back to her missal, and her rosary, and her dozing.

The young girl stood for a moment in the same attitude, her bowed face hidden in her hands; and then starting suddenly up, hastened along a corridor, up a flight of stairs, and tapped at a door on the landing above. "Enter," said a sweet voice; and obeying the order, the young lady went in and knelt down at the feet of the stately Lady Abbess, who sat with a pile of letters before her, reading.

"Well, dear child," said the lady, laying her hand kindly on the bowed head, "what is it?"

For all answer the young lady placed in her hand the card she had just received, and bowed her face lower than ever. The nun looked at it gravely at first; and then, with a little smile:

"Well, my dear, it is very well; you have my permission to receive your visitor."

"But not alone, mother! dear mother, not alone!"

The lady still sat and looked at her with the same quiet smile.

"Will you not come with me, mother? I—I—should like it so much!"

"Certainly, my dear, if you wish it."

Both arose, descended the stairs, passed through the vestibule, and opening a door to the left, entered the very plainest of convent parlors. The only occupant was a gentleman, stalwart and tall, in undress military uniform, bronzed and mustached, and looking wonderfully out of place within those monastic walls. He rose as they entered, bowed low to the stately superior; and, crossing the room, eagerly held out his hand to the younger lady, who dropped her eyes, and colored again, as she touched it.

"I am very glad you have returned safe from your dangerous mission, Sir Cliffe," said the superior, sitting down. "Allow me to congratulate you on the success you have achieved."

"You are very kind, madam!" said the soldier, looking a little reproachfully, as he spoke, at the young lady, who persistently refused to meet his eye. "Can I not say two or three words in private to Miss Shirley?"

"Undoubtedly, sir; it was by her own request I came! Vivia, take a seat over there by the window, and hear what your friend has to say."

Vivia and the gentleman seated themselves near the window as directed; and the superior, taking out a rosary, began saying her Ave Marias, with her eyes fixed on the floor, to all intents and purposes a hundred miles away.

"You have just come from England, I suppose," said Vivia, at last breaking a somewhat embarrassing pause.

"I reached Paris an hour ago. And how have you been, Vivia? Are you always going to be pale and wan, and never get your roses back? I believe they half starve you here."

Vivia looked up with something like her old laugh.

"Sister Therese, our cook, could tell a different story! She would cook me *pate de fois gras* every day if I would eat them. And how are all in Cliftonlea—dear, dear old Cliftonlea? How often I have dreamed of it since I left!"

"You shall see it again before the end of the week. All are well, but terribly lonely without Vivia! I believe I have a couple of billets-doux for you somewhere."

"Hardly billets-doux, I think," smiled Vivia, as he drew out his pocketbook, and took from between the leaves two dainty little missives, one three-cornered, rose-colored, and perfumed; the other in a plain white envelope. Vivia smiled again as she looked at the first.

"Lady Agnes will always be elegant; I could tell this was hers in Tartary!" she said, as she broke it open and glanced over its brief contents. Very brief they were:

"MY DARLING:—Come back. I have been dying of *ennui* since you left. Nothing in the world could have made me so happy as to know you are to be my daughter after all. A. S."

Vivia glanced shyly up; and seeing the grave smiling eyes bent upon her, blushed, and opened the other without a word:

"MY DEAR COUSIN:—Try and forgive me for the past—I never can forgive myself. Sometimes, in your prayers, remember MARGARET SHIRLEY."

"Your letters are somewhat shorter than those ladies usually write," her companion said, with his grave smile; but Vivia's eyes were full of tears.

"Poor Margaret! dear Margaret! I hope she is happy in her convent! When did you see her?"

"Yesterday. And if one might judge by faces, she is as happy as it is in her nature to be. Poor Tom's death was a terrible shock to her; she saw him when he was brought in riddled with Russian bullets!"

"Did she?"

She was sitting with averted face, her eyes shaded by her hands, and Sir Cliffe went on:

"You heard, of course, he was dead, but you never heard the particulars. Poor fellow! shall I ever forget that half an hour before he was talking to me, sound and well, in my tent? But these things are merely the fortunes of war."

"Go on!" Vivia said, softly.

"We were expecting an engagement, and my post was one of imminent danger; and not knowing what the result might be, I was making a few arrangements in case the worst should happen. It was then for the first time I told him how I had called here when *en route* for the seat of war, the question I asked you, and the answer my good little Vivia gave. As he heard it, he laid his head down on the table as he did once before, I remember, when I gave him your note in person; and those were the last words we ever exchanged. The engagement began, a folorn hope was storming a breach in the wall, and had been hurled back again and again by a rain of bullets, until they were half cut to pieces, and no one could be found to lead them again. Then it was that Tom sprung from the ranks with a cheer, and a wild cry of "Come on, lads!" that rings in my ears even now. In one instant he scaled the wall, in another he had fallen back, pierced with a score of Russian balls, but the last trial succeeded, and the breach was won!"

Vivia did not speak, but he could see how fast the tears were falling through the hands that covered her face.

"When they came to bury him," concluded the colonel, hastily, "they found in his breast, all torn and shattered, a little book you had once given him, and within it the note you sent him in prison. Poor Tom! they buried him with military honors, but the shock of seeing him nearly killed Margaret."

Still Vivia could do nothing but weep. Her companion looked at her anxiously.

"I ought not to have told you this story—such horrors are not for your ears."

"Oh, yes, yes; it is better I should know it! Poor Tom! poor Margaret!"

"Do not think of it any longer! I have a thousand things to say to you, and no time to say one of them. Do you know I return to England to-morrow?"

"So soon!"

"Yes. And I'm going to take you with me."

"Oh!" exclaimed Vivia, with a little cry of consternation. "It is impossible! I never could!"

"There is no such word as impossible in my vocabulary! You must! There is no occasion for delay, and they expect us at home."

"But it is so very sudden. I never can be ready!"

"Permit me to judge of that! What readiness do you require?"

"Oh, I have nothing to wear!" said Vivia, with a laugh and a blush.

"You can wear what you have on—can you not?"

"Black! Nonsense—what are you thinking of? No one ever heard of such a thing!"

"Very well! Since you are inexorable, I shall appeal to higher powers, and see if they cannot coerce you into obedience."

He crossed the room as he spoke, and took a seat near the superior, who lifted her eyes inquiringly from the carpet pattern.

"Madame, business obliges me to return to England to-morrow? Is there any valid reason why Vivia should not return with me?"

"It is very soon," said the lady, musingly.

"True, but I assure you the haste is unavoidable, and as the ceremony is to be strictly private, a day more or less cannot make much difference."

"I suppose not. Well, monsieur, it shall be as you wish. Her friend, Madame la Marquise de St. Hilary, and her bonne Jeannette, can accompany her in the carriage, and meet you at the church. I cannot tell you, monsieur, how sorry we all will be to part with her."

So that matter was settled, and Monsieur le General took his departure with a beaming face to prepare for the ceremony of to-morrow, and Mdlle. Vivia went to prepare for it in her own way, by spending the remainder of the day, and long into the night, on the *prie-dieu* before the altar. She was back there again by daydawn the next morning; but when the grand carriage of the St. Hilarys stopped at the convent door she was ready in the simplest and plainest of traveling-dresses to take her seat beside the marquise. Adieu had been said to all her convent friends, and she sat quietly crying behind her vail, until they drew up before Notre Dame, where they found General Shirley and a few of his friends awaiting them. And then a very quiet marriage-ceremony was performed, and Vivia had a right to the name of Shirley no one could dispute now, and was sitting the happiest bride on earth, beside her soldier-husband, in the express-train for Calais.

Once more the joy-bells were ringing in Cliftonlea; once more the charity-children turned out to strew the streets with flowers; once more triumphal arches were raised, and the flag of welcome floated from the cupola of Castle Cliffe; once more bonfires were kindled, fireworks went off, and music and dancing, drinking and feasting were to be had for the asking, and crowds upon crowds of well dressed people filled the park. Castle Cliffe from cellar to battlement was one blaze of light; once more the German band came down from London to delight the ears of hundreds of guests; once more Lady Agnes was blazing resplendent in velvet and diamonds, and once more Sir Roland, on his gold-headed cane, limped from room to room, in spite of his gout, in perfect ecstasies at seeing his pet Vivia again—it was so delightfully like the old times. And Vivia was there again, robed as a bride, in white lace and satin, and orange-blossoms and jewels, lovely as a vision; and this time the bridegroom was not absent. He stood there in his grand general's uniform; and no shadow from the past was permitted to dim the brightness of that night. Not even Lady Agnes could think of her obscure birth; for no princess could look more noble and stately than did she; no one thought of that father of hers who had broken so artfully from jail, and made his escape to parts unknown, helped, rumor said, by Colonel Shirley himself. No one thought of anything but that the bride and bridegroom were the handsomest and happiest couple in the world.

"Come out here, Vivia!" he said to her, opening a glass-door leading down to the terrace; "it is a lovely night, and this ball-room is oppressively hot."

He drew her arm within his, and Sir Cliffe and Lady Shirley walked along the terrace in the serene moonlight. The park, looking like fairy-land, lay at their feet, filled with their tenantry, and the townsfolk, and music, and happy voices; the town lay quiet and tranquil, looking pretty and picturesque as all places do in the moonlight; and far away, spread out the wide sea, its ceaseless waves surging the same old song to the shore they had sung when she had heard them first, a happy, careless child.

"Dear, dear Cliftonlea!" said Vivia, her eyes filling with happy tears. "How glad I am to see it again!"

"I thought you would not forget it in your French convent!" he said, laughing. "My dear little wife, there is no place like home!"

"True, but I have learned one thing in my French convent, that favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, and that after all, *mon ame!*" pointing upward, "there is the true *patrie!*"

He did not speak. He only lifted the lovely hand reverently to his lips; and in silence the bronzed soldier and his pretty bride stood on the terrace watching the young moon rise.

THE END.

Adventure With Brigands.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

A RIFLE-SHOT from behind a fringe of bushes on the rocks overhanging the road, then four-and-twenty as fierce-looking rascals as you ever saw before the footlights came leaping down into the road; and while half a dozen ran to the horses' heads, the rest came crowding around the carriage door, jabbering at us in their heathenish Italian.

The English family with whom I had been traveling ever since yesterday morning exhibited unmistakable signs of demoralization. They had become a solid heap of terror-stricken humanity in one corner of the coach, of which heap Smith *pere* was the chief corner-stone, Mrs. S. and Miss S. having wound themselves about him with manifold shrieks and groans. As for myself, a young gentleman from America, traveling to finish my education, if I remember rightly, I uttered distinctly a few of those peculiarly forcible oaths it was my good fortune to collect during a recent visit to Colorado. The interruption

COURTING IN THE COUNTRY.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Erastus called on Hannah Jane
On the dark end of Monday;
He wore the suit of clothes he gen-
Erally wore on Sunday.

He said, "Good-evening!" and sat down
With grace and ease befitting;
He labored to compose himself,
She labored at her knitting.

He cleared his throat, and crossed his hands,
They seemed to be a bother;
He put one leg upon his knee,
And then he put the other.

He looked up at the mantel-clock
To see the moments flitting,
And went to thinking what to say—
She went on with her knitting.

He thought of men who talked like books,
And thought himself quite horrid;
He brushed some dust from off his sleeve,
And stroked his classic forehead.

He gouged from out his eye a bug
That flew in there unwitting;
As he kept growing bashfuller—
She kept on at her knitting.

He thought to talk about the crops,
The circus and the weather,
But in his mind those things got mixed
And jumbled all together.

He blew his nose, and tilted back
The chair where he was sitting,
Then he got up and rubbed his head—
And she kept at her knitting.

He gently coughed behind his hand;
I say this to his credit;
And thought of nothing he could say,
And so he wisely said it.

He scratched his head with his left hand,
It was a quaker meeting,
And quaked as once she looked around
And worked away at knitting.

He gave a sidelong glance at her,
And thought that she was charming;
His cheeks were burning, and he thought
The fire was rather warming.

Determined to say something, as
The night was fastly flitting,
He said "Good-night!" and left the house,
And she kept on a knitting.

LEAVES From an Actor's Life; or, Recollections of Plays and Players.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.

XIII.—The Eagle Theater. Wyzeman Marshall—The Warlock of the Glen—Charles H. Eaton—His Peculiarities—Booth and Eaton Contrasted by Joe Cowell—Eaton's Accidental Death—Joseph Hudson Kirby—"Wake me up when Kirby dies!"—His Meteor Career—His Return to England—Last Appearance.

Among the actors at the National Theater was one by the name of Wyzeman Marshall—and he well deserves his name of *Wyzeman*, for he is one of the very few managers that was wise enough to retire from management at the proper time, and keep the money he had made.

Marshall was a great favorite with the North End boys, and having some difficulty with "Old Piff" withdrew from the National and opened an opposition theater in an old frame building on Haverhill street. This theater was called the "Eagle." It proved a very short-lived affair, however.

I speak of it in this connection as I saw several celebrities there, and I played there myself, personating "Adelbert, the rightful heir," in an old-time drama called the "Warlock of the Glen."

Here I first met Augustus W. Fenno—"Handsome Gus"—then quite a youth, and who subsequently appeared with success in all the principal cities of the Union. He was a handsome man in every sense of the word, with a fine, intellectual face, and a tall, well-proportioned figure. There was a time when Fenno might have shaken Forrest on his throne of greatness. It has always been a mystery to me why he did not. A Fenno took to Spiritualism in his old age that may account for it. This fact would presuppose a lack of reasoning power in his brain.

Here also was Mrs. H. Lewis, an Amazonian style of actress; one of the first, if not the first, to play Richard the Third, and other male characters in this country. At that time the combats in the last act was always fought with what are called fighting swords, which are unlike any weapon that was ever used in actual warfare, though they bear some resemblance to a Scotch claymore, with half the blade cut off. The net-work of iron, or basket, around the handle is for the purpose of protecting the knuckles from an awkward blow.

This sword still flourishes at the Bowery Theater, New York.

They are susceptible of a great deal of heavy work, and Mrs. Lewis used to make this combat thrilling. It used to make my hair stand on end then; but now, looking back "through the dim vista of departed years," it seems to me supremely ridiculous.

At this theater also appeared one of those transitory stars, who flash brilliantly through the dramatic heaven for a short season, and then disappear in utter darkness. This was Charles Eaton.

Whether he had talent or not at this late day I cannot determine; my memory of him is too faint for that. But, one singular freak of his lingers in my recollection.

He was playing William Tell, in Sheridan Knowles' play of that name, and in the last scene, after the successful shot with the arrow, at the apple placed upon his son's head—a test of his skill proposed by the "Tyrant Gesler"—and the Swiss rush in and overpower the Austrians, Tell should proclaim that "Switzerland is free!"

In the bustle of the struggle with "the minions of the tyrant," Eaton forgot these concluding words, and the prompter rung the signal bell for the curtain without waiting for them, but, as Eaton saw the roll of the curtain nearing the stage, they suddenly occurred to his memory, and dropping suddenly upon his hands and knees he poked his head beneath the descending curtain, and cried out: "Ladies and gentlemen, I forgot to tell you that my country is free!" and drew back his head just in time to escape a bump from the curtain-roller.

Eaton was said to be an imitator of Junius Brutus Booth, as Booth was said to be an imitator of Edmund Kean. I wonder if there ever was an actor yet that did not imitate *somebody*? I frankly confess that when I began to act I imitated everybody that I thought was good, and thus formed a kind of conglomerate style of my own.

I cannot give you an opinion of Charles Eaton, but I will give you that of an old actor, Joe Cowell, who writes thus in regard to Booth and Eaton, and others:

"Cooper's faults had been so long copied," he says, (Cooper was a favorite star-actor of the past,) "and, of course, increased in the appropriation that there was not an objectionable, and, at the same time, original bit left for a new beginner to found a style on; but Booth, keeping with truth and purity, a living likeness of Kean's beauties full in view, had, of course, all the smaller-sized mad actors as his satellites; but I know of none worth naming among them except C. H. Eaton. He achieved a sort of popularity, and the distinguished title, in the play-bills, of the *Young American Tragedian*. In addition to his giving a most excellent imitation of Booth's acting, he assumed a lamentable caricature of his eccentricities off the stage. Now there was method in Booth's madness; however ridiculous his antics were they only excited pity, but never laughter. There was a melancholy responsibility, if it may be so called, about all he said and did while in frenzy's imagined mood, that, if you believed he was insane, it would grieve you to the heart to see a noble mind thus overthrown; and, if you thought it was assumed, it would cause quite as painful a feeling to think that one so gifted should condescend to ape degraded nature. But Eaton's second-hand vagaries were disgusting; his distorted fancies, too, like other monstrosities, had to call in the aid of alcohol to perpetuate their first-conceived deformity. Poor fellow! he carried the joke too far, at last, and fell from a balcony at his hotel, after performing one night at Pittsburgh, and died in a day or two afterward."

I have quoted "Old Joe Cowell" here because I met him at an early stage of my career, and I shall speak of him hereafter in full. He was the grandfather of the celebrated Kate Bateman, who recently created such an impression in the character of "Leah, the Forsaken," in New York city and London.

There was another "mad-actor," who was celebrated at this time. I saw him play the character of "Sir Edward Mortimer," in the "Iron Chest," at the Eagle Theater, and I was much pleased with him. His name was Joseph Hudson Kirby—better known, familiarly, as Joe Kirby.

This was the "Young Tragedian" who afterward became such a favorite with the "Bowery boys," in New York city. He was very effective in the heroes of the melodramas, and his death scenes were thrilling. This gave rise to the saying: "Wake me up when Kirby dies." The tired newsboy, content to doze through the opening scenes of the play, was sure to be wide awake when Kirby came to his simulated death agonies.

Whisky was this promising actor's bane. It ruined him, as it will ruin any actor who cannot control his appetite. Let me give you his brief history.

In the course of a few years, from being an utility man at the Pittsburgh Theater, he arose to fame, and commanded a good salary and benefits, as the best melodramatic actor on the American stage. He was an Englishman by birth, but came to the United States when he was about eighteen years of age. He had followed a seafaring life, which occupation peculiarly fitted him for the representation of the stage sailors, which were then very popular with the public.

In the matter of figure, and strength of lungs, he was the rival of Edwin Forrest. When dissipation drove him from this country he returned to England, and announced himself in London as the "Young American Tragedian," thereby implying that he was an American by birth.

The managers of the minor theaters, such as the *Queen's*, the *Marylebone*, the *City of London* and *Pavilion Theater* gave him profitable engagements; but he relapsed again into his habits of dissipation, which marred all the talent he possessed, and kept him in perpetual difficulties.

He had married a young actress of considerable talent, and one child was the result of this marriage. This child died the day before he did, and they were buried side by side.

Kirby's last engagement was at a theater in London called the *Albert Saloon*—his last appearance was in the character of Martean, in *The Carpenter of Rouen*, an American play, written by Dr. J. S. Jones, of Boston, and which Kirby had introduced to a London audience.

The immediate cause of his death was an affection of the lungs, and he received much kindness from the members of the company during his illness; and when he died they provided for his widow, for the members of the dramatic profession, although their means are at the best precarious, are ever most forward to extend the hand of succor to a fellow-actor in the hour of need.

Back From the Dead.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

It is a strange story that I have to tell. But it is a true one, and I have learned enough in my lifetime to know that the truest stories are apt to be the strangest ones.

There had been a mortgage on grandfather Dean's farm for a good many years; ever since I was a little girl, in fact, for I can remember hearing him talk it over with my mother, and they used to lay plans together by which they could raise money to meet coming payments.

Squire Eaton, who owned the big house on the hill, and great farms all about him, held the mortgage. He and grandfather had been old friends, and he never hurried when the payments were overdue. "Take your time, Mr. Dean," he would say, in his cheery way; "I sha'n't starve if I don't get it in a month or two, I guess. It'll all come right, so don't worry about it."

And by hard work, and hard planning, and saving this and that, to turn into money, the small payments were made, year after year, and so I grew up into womanhood. Grandfather's heart was glad to think that the farm was being cleared of its burden, and that when he died he could leave the old homestead to us, free from debt.

One day he went up the hill to Squire Eaton's, and when he came back his face wore a happier expression than I had ever seen it wear before.

"The old farm is ours, now," he said, pleased as a boy over the possession of some long-coveted thing. "All ours, thank God, and how we can begin to breathe again, after so many years of toiling and saving."

The very next day the neighborhood was terribly startled by the tidings of Squire Eaton's death. He had been found dead in his bed.

"There was a little more business to attend to about that mortgage," grandfather said, that evening, as we sat together, talking over the sudden death of the owner of the white house on the hill. "But it didn't amount to much. I have the receipts all safe. I suppose Hugh Dane will be heir of all the Squire's property. I'm glad we got our business finished up before he came into possession. They say he's a hard man to deal with."

About a month after that, Hugh Dane came and took possession of his property. I hated him from the first time I saw him. He had the cruelest eyes I ever saw. They made me afraid of him. He seemed to take as great a fancy to me as I had dislike for him, and kept coming to call on us, and used to coax me to go out riding with him, and bring me flowers, and books, which I never read.

"I think he's in love with your pretty face, Susie," grandfather said, pinching my cheeks. "How would you like to be mistress of the big house on the hill?"

"Not at all, if he were master there," I answered. "I hate him."

One morning grandfather Dean complained of feeling bad. All day he grew worse, and before midnight of that day he was dead.

Hugh Dane came and proffered his aid in our affliction, and mother accepted it, much against my wishes.

"You wrong him, I think," she said. "He means to be very kind."

But all the time I could not help feeling afraid of him, and if we were left alone together for a moment, I was like a mouse shut up with a cat, and wishing I could escape.

It was about a month after grandfather Dean was buried, that Hugh asked me to be his wife.

"Oh, no, no!" I cried, more frightened than ever I was before in all my life. "I can't marry you. I am so sorry you ever asked me."

"But *why* can't you?" he asked, and tried to get hold of my hand and kiss me.

"Because I hate you!" I cried, springing away from him. "If it were to save my life, I would never marry you, Hugh Dane, and you knew I hated you before you asked me."

"Don't put on too many airs," he said, with a cruel, hard smile. "You must remember that I have it in my power to turn you out of house and home any day. The mortgage on this place was due some time ago, and if I were to foreclose it, what would become of you?"

"Grandfather paid up the mortgage," I answered. "He paid it before Squire Eaton died. If you were a gentleman you would never have used such threats as that. But you see we are not in your power, after all."

He smiled again—that evil, hard smile, that always made me shudder.

"I can convince you to the contrary," he said. "There are several payments in Squire Eaton's book that have never been marked paid, and the mortgage, which would have been given up, if it had been lifted, is in my possession."

"But grandfather said he had the receipts," I said.

"Produce them, then," he answered.

And mother and I hunted high and low for them. We hunted from one end of the house to the other—everywhere. But not a receipt could we find.

"I know he had them," mother said. "He told me so."

"I will give you two days to make your decision in," Hugh Dane said. "It may seem strange to you that I should use such means to bring about your consent to a marriage with me, but I love you, and I would do anything to win you."

Perhaps he did, in his tigerish way. I don't know.

We hunted through those long two days, with heavy hearts, but all in vain.

That evening, as we sat in the old kitchen, we were very silent. We had too many things to think about to care to talk much.

All at once I felt that we were not alone. You have felt just as I did when some one has been watching you, and you looked up to catch their eye upon you. I looked down the kitchen and there, in the corner where his empty chair stood, I saw Grandfather Dean as plainly as I ever saw him in my life.

"What you have been looking for is here," he said, touching his old Bible, which was laying on the table there. And then he vanished like a sudden mist which a wind dispels.

"Did you see him?" cried mother, pale and trembling. "It was your grandfather come back from the dead."

I went to the table where the Bible lay, without feeling a particle of fear. I don't know why. Some way I could not make it seem as if I had seen a ghost. I took up the old book, and as I passed my fingers over the cover, I felt something under the faded green baize. I tore off the cloth which had been fastened there to protect the book, and there, between it and the boards, were the lost receipts! We counted them over, one by one. They dated from years back, and the last one read, "Received of Samuel Dean twenty-five dollars, being the final payment due on the mortgage held by me. Signed, JOHN EATON."

"He came back from the other world to help us out of our trouble," mother said, solemnly and thankfully. "It seems like a dream, but it was not a dream. I know now that the dead can come back."

When Hugh Dane came for his answer the next day I laid before him the lost receipts.

"I am not in your power, sir," I said, coldly. "Look them over and satisfy yourself that they are correct."

He glared at me like a tiger at bay. He was baffled at last.

"Grandfather Dean came back last night to tell us where they were," I said. "With the dead to help us you are powerless."

He looked at me as if he thought I was crazy, but answered not a word. He got up and went out, pretty soon, and after that I saw no more of him for weeks. I think he did love me, perhaps, and if he did, I should not be a woman if I were not sorry for him. But I could never have married him—never! I would have gone out into the world to fight the battle of life single-handed first. But Grandfather Dean saved me from doing that.

Border Tales.

Old Grizzly as a Married Man.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

One night some weeks after Old Grizzly had related the history of his courtship, while sitting by the fire smoking our pipes, I put at him to keep his promise and tell me about the "only time he was ever married."

"Oh, dorg-gone it, Ralph!" growled the old hunter, "ye'r' allers a-wantin' me to talk about disergreeable things, an'—"

"Why, uncle Grizzly, you *don't* mean to say that your married life was disagreeable, do you?" I said, in surprise.

"Well but I am a stag's horn ef I doosen't mean ter say jess thet thing! Waugh! it makes me sick et ther stummick ter barely think uv it," and he put on a grimace that set the whole camp laughing.

"Yer larfin', eh?" he growled. "Well, then sum uv *you* go an' git yerselves tied onto a Pawnee squaw, a *ole* 'un, mind yer, an' durn meef yer don't change thet tune.

"I'll tell yer, boyees, how 'twur, but yer must all promise as yer won't never fetch up ther subjeck ag'in. It allers riles me, an' when I gits riled *bad* thar hain't no tellin'," and the good-natured old bear-tamer put on his most ferocious looks, at the same time trying to keep down a grin.

"Ter start with, boyees, I onc't got married, but 'twur ter save my ha'r. An' so yer see I didn't kinder look on ther barg'in es fa'r, an' ther fust chance I got I jess lit out, es ther feller sez I got *up* an' dusted fur ther settle*ment* an' freedum.

"'Twur a quare thing all roun', it wur. An' I hain't never been able to git at ther bottom uv ther mist'ry till yit.

"One night I wur layin' in my bark shanty, away up on Solomon's Fork uv Kansas, all alone by myself, fur my pardner had been rubbed out by ther Pawnees a cupple uv weeks afore, an' I wur es lonesum es a blind groun'-hog in a cypruss swamp.

"Well, I sed I wur a-layin' thar thinkin', an' by-an'-by I must 'a' fell asleep er got a-dozin', an' then I got a-dreamin' es I thort fu'st off, but arterwards kem to the *con*clusion thet I must 'a' been wide awake.

"Es I lay thar, wi' my face a-turned to'rst ther door uv ther shanty, I see ther piece uv bark thet chocked up ther en*trance* move to one side, an' ther *bee*utifulest squaw—my goodness, boyees! but she wur purty!—walk right straight in an' stan' in ther middle uv ther floor an' begin a-lookin' me in the eye.

"Her'n wur ther black sort, big an' soft an' full of water like a' antelope's, an' es she kep' on gazin' at me wi' 'em I felt sumthin' a-runnin' up an' down my back-bone fur all ther world like a scorpi'n cavortin' over ther place, an' draggin' his tale arter him.

"By-an'-by ther squaw ups an' sez a lot uv stuff about ther Man uv ther B'ars bein' lonesum' in his wigwam, she did, an' then went on ter say es how ther Grand Pawnees wur on ther rampage, an' thet ther lodge uv ther pale-face wurn't jess ther safest place on the airth at thet *par*tickler minit.

"Now yer see, boyees, *thet* kind uv talk hed some sense into it, fur it meant bizness, an' when she stopped a-talkin' an' stood wi' both arms re'ched out to'rst me, I war goin' ter ax her a question er two, when bang! went sumthin', an' I foun' myself a-settin' straight up onto them buffler-pelts a-trimblin'-like all over an' ther pus*peration* a-rollin' down my face bigger'n 'scopet-balls.

"I war off'n them skins quicker'n lightnin', an' out arter ther gal, but she hed been too fast fur me, and warn't nowhar to be seen.

"Well, sez I to myself, ef this hyar don't jess git *me* I'm a nigger, an' wi' thet I went back an' lay down ag'in.

"But it warn't no use tryin' to go to sleep. Sum'thin' war wrong wi' *my* eyes, an' every time I shet 'em thar stood thet Pawnee squaw ag'in lookin' at me wi' *her* big eyes.

"Fur more'n a' hour I stood it, gittin' more an' more restless like, till I jess couldn't lay thar no longer. An' so I gits up.

"Es I started to ther door somethin' sez to me 'Don't leave yer rifle,' an' acterly wi'out thinkin' I picked her up an' crawled out inter ther open."

"Look-a-hyar, Grizzly, what ther blazes hev all this 'ere got ter do wi' ther *ole* squaw es tackled yer?" said Rube, who as usual was gnawing at a bone.

"Keep them long ears open, ole hoss, an' you'll hear by-an'-by.

"Well, I got outside an' stood lookin' aroun' at ther timmer an' ther river an' perairy, still thinkin' about thet gal, when all uv a suddent I hear' a stick crack in the bresh clust by, an' afore I could wink a'most I war surround*ed* by a yowltin' pack uv Pawnees.

"I throwed my rifle up an' war about ter down ther leadin' warrior when I see it would on'y make things wuss, an' I took her down wi'out shootin'.

"Lordy! how them Indians *did* go on when they foun' they'd ketched me nappin' an' hedn't lost a man, an' when I kem ter think ther same thing mebby I warn't riled *some*. Well I jess *reck*in I war.

"An' thar I hed ter stan' an' see ther imps t'ar down ther shanty, sp'ile what they didn't want an' tote off the ballance an' me 'long wi' it.

"All at onc't ther words uv ther gal kem back to my mind es I trotted along like a half-broke mustang, an' I wish I may die ef ther recolleckshun didn't jess knock ther wind outen me slicker'n a whistle.

"Then thinks I what are goin' to kem outen ther words 'bout ther Man uv ther B'ars bein' lonesum' in his wigwam, er es much es ter say ther best thing he ked do war ter take a squaw.

"But thet I *know'd* warn't a-goin' ter happen, leastwise I thort I know'd it; but, boyees, thar hain't nothin' sart'in on this airth, *eespeci*ally 'mong ther red-bellies.

"Well, I see Rube, thar, ar' gittin' onpatient, an' so I'll git to ther marryin' part es quick es I kin.

"Ther next mornin' the Pawnees hilt a powwow to see whether they'd skelp er roast me then er wait till they got to thar village. Ther ole warriors war fur waitin' ter give ther squaws an' pappooses a chance, an', es thar war more uv them nor thar war uv ther young men, I missed ther stake by ther skin uv my eye-balls, an' war tuck on to the Injun town.

"I *do* reckin thet never war sech a to-do es thar war in thet village when I got thar an' they l'arned who the prisoner war.

"Yer know, boyees, I hed been ruther hefty onto the Pawnees ever sence thet time in ther Platt' kentry whar they rubbed out poor Ike Merrimee, and thar war a big account writ up ag'in' me.

"They roped me up to a tree an' 'mused the'rselves all thet day wi' throwin' ther tommyhack at my head, an' shootin' arrers all round my body to see how clus't they ked kem wi'out hittin'.

"Then the next day they hoppled my legs an' turned me loose on the open, wi' all ther youngsters in ther willage arter me wi' switches an' clubs. I soon bu'sted thet fun up by knockin' half a dozen uv ther imps purty nigh into kingdom kem, an' then they formed ther lines fur ther gauntlet.

"They kem ther ole dodge uv tellin' me thet ef I re'ched the council-house they'd turn me loose, but I nearly killed the red niggur as tole me the lie wi' my fist, and arter thet they leff me alone.

"I made ther council-house, but it war on'y arter I war hacked all to pieces, an' airly ther next mornin' I wus led out to ther stake.

"Thinks I to myself, hyars the eend uv Grizzly, an' then I thinks what a fool thet 'ere gal wur to talk to *me* 'bout gettin' married, when all uv a suddent somebody rushed forward—I kedn't see fur ther smoke who—an' kicked ther fire out, an' put ther arms roun' me an' the post.

"You see, my eyes war blinded yit, an' I didn't see who 'twar as war cuttin' ther ropes an' leadin' me outen ther circle till I hed got more'n half-way to ther willage.

"When I *did* see, boyees, I wish I may die ef it warn't es much es I ked do to keep frum faintin' right on ther spot."

A sudden burst of laughter from the boys told how comical the mere thought of Old Grizzly's fainting was, but without appearing to notice it, the bear-tamer went on with his story.

"Lordy! what a sight I did have thar right afore my eyes! I hev seen a power uv Injuns in my life: all sorts an' sizes *an'* colors; old 'uns an' young 'uns; but may I be chaw'd to death by a lot uv Mexikin peccaries ef thet 'ere squaw as war leadin' me off to her wigwam as *her* meat, warn't the cussedest lookin' uv 'em all.

"Oh, pshaw, boyees! it ain't *no* use of my tryin' ter tell yer how ugly she wur, an' old! She jess looked old enuff for to hev been the mammy uv every durned red-skin in ther tribe.

"I *couldn't* stan' her nohow. It warn't no use, an' I bu'sted loose from ther ole she-devil an' lit out fur whar the Injuns war still gethered roun' the stake.

"But the squaw wur too menny fur me. She looked old, and she *wur* old, but I tell yer she ked run eekle to er goat, an' I hedn't gone half-way—all stiff I wur an' sore, yer know—afore she overhauled me an' started back to ther willage ag'in. How them Injuns did larf! They wur mad as bald hornets et bein' sarcumvented outen ther fun by ther ole gal, but hit would 'a' made a muel larf ter see me travelin' an' ther squaw arter me like mad.

"Well, well, boyees, I war tied Injun-fashion to thet 'ere she-wolf, fur she jess wur thet an' nothin else, an' for nigh about six weeks I hed a life uv it, I tell *you*.

"Es a gineral thing ther squaws does the work fur the family, but yer kin bet high thet mine didn't hurt herself none a-workin', less she done workin' on me wi' a big muskeet bresh. When she got her hand in at thet biziness she 'peared to like it rather'n not, an' durn my ole moccasins ef she didn't usen to git up in ther night an' lam me fur fear she'd forgit how afore mornin'. Well, human natur' ar human natur', an' it can't stand ever'thing allers.

"My pashunce wore out, 'sides which I war gettin' oneasy 'bout my b'ars as I hed leff in Jim Curtis' keer while I took thet turn up in Solomon's.

"My body war full uv whelks bigger'n yer arm, an' spotted all over wi' bruises wuss'n a Mexikin wildcat ar wi' spots, an' when I see'd *thet*, I broke down an' swore to myself as how me an' ther ole gal hed ter part.

"I waited a good while afore ther chance kem, but it *did* kem at last, and yur bet I didn't let it slip.

"One night when it wur rainin' hard, an' dark es a stack uv minks, a drunk Injun kem staggerin' into our lodge, an' afore we ked move him out, he fell kerwhallop on ther floor an' war fast asleep in a minnit.

"He hed his rifle an' fixin's all on, an' his skelpin'-knife and tommyhack bersides. When I see'd ther Injun layin' thar I sez to myself, now's yer time, Grizzly, an' ef yer don't git, yer a bigger fool nor I took yer fur.

"Well, sir, while I war sittin' lookin' at thet drunken Injun, ther ole squaw war lookin' at me, an' she must 'a' diskivered somethin' in my eye, fur up she gits, grupped all ther weepins an' started outen the lodge.

"I saw my chance slippin' an' I got desprit. It didn't take but one lep to put me atween her an' ther door, *seein' which she dropped* ther rifle, an' wi' ther tommyhack in one hand, an' knife in t'other, she made at me wuss'n a mad she-painter.

"I know'd then thet I'd hev to kill her, an' I hated it awful, but thar warn't no other way uv my gettin' off.

"It war teetotally needcessary thet I shed hev a rifle when I started, an' I mightn't never hev anuther chance, 'sides which the ole hag war cuttin' an' slashin' at me real savage.

"Hittin' her a sockdolliger atween the eyes, I sent her tumblin' back into ther lodge, an' quicker'n thinkin' I hed ther rifle up an' reddy when she kem ag'in.

"I on'y hit her onc't, an' *mebby* I didn't *quite* kill her dead; but, ennyhow, she never moved or sed nothin' while I grupped ther weepins an' some jerked buffler an' stole outen ther door.

"In ther k'rall I roped ther best mustang I could pick out, an' by mornin' I war nigh fifty mile from the Pawnee town.

"Thet's how I wur married, boyees, an how I got cl'ar of my squaw; but thar's one thing thet allers gits me back when I think uv it, an' thet ar', who wur the gal thet kem into ther ranch an' tole me I'd be attackeded thet night?"

"It was only an apparition, Grizzly," said one of the boys.

"It warn't no sech a durned thing!" exclaimed the old bear-tamer, savagely. "It war a *gal*, an' a purty one et thet, an' durn my ole moccasins ef ever I kem across *her*, an' she ar' willin', I wouldn't mind tryin' *ther marryin' over ag'in!*"

Beat Time's Notes.

Time untied waits for no man.

A shoemaker is always shoer of his living.

If every man's mind is his kingdom that kingdom has often a bad ruler.

Does the road that goes to Hartford come back the same way?

There may be a good many Lots nowadays but they are not going to Sod-em.

A man who follows his appetite will be sure to bring up at the steak.

The soul of the wicked is as full of thorns as the sole of the shoemaker is full of pegs.

Hasty marriages often are afterward fed on hasty puddings.

Humility is often like a tight boot, very neat but exceedingly uncomfortable.

In the matter of brass-band music it may not be out of the way to observe that Strauss shows which way the wind blows.

Jenkins says the way his wife sticks to him is very wonderful indeed—that is to say she broomsticks to him.

In Texas when a man goes up to a bar, he says: "I'll take another glass of that hydrophobia."

Some men will wail when they injure a finger, when they would make no noise when they injure their character.

Marrying in haste and repenting at leisure is not so bad as marrying at leisure and repenting in haste, so it seems to a philosopher up a stump.